

N. Vishneva-Sarafanova

**THE
PRIVILEGED
GENERATION:
CHILDREN
IN
THE SOVIET
UNION**



Progress Publishers

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СОВЕТСКИЙ РЕБЁНОК В ФОКУСЕ СТА ЗАБОТ
На английском языке

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Introduction

The Tragic Paradox of Childhood

Mankind has always cherished children. Artists and sculptors throughout history have lovingly painted or moulded their images; composers have written wonderful music reflecting a child's nature. Federico García Lórrca, a Spanish poet wrote: "A child is Nature's greatest creation, no ideal, harmony or mystery can equal a child..."¹

But there is a tragic paradox in man's attitude towards children. They were often sold into slavery and in tsarist Russia there were even instances when peasant women were forced to nurse their owners' puppies, thus depriving their own infants. Under fascism thousands of children were killed in gas chambers, shot without mercy or suffered as the victims of monstrous experiments.

Several decades later children became the object of genetic experiments and neurosurgery performed in laboratories and "research" centres in the USA and aimed at divesting them of the ability to "think actively".

This is a book about the children of the 1980s. The 20th century has witnessed two world wars and continuous military conflict. This is a century of technological progress which has revealed the secrets of the atom, the mysteries of the cell, and the wonders of space, but is still unable to provide *all*

¹ Federico García Lórrca. *Obras Completas*, Aguilar, Madrid, 1967. p. 96.

the children in the world with food, clean water and medical care, i.e., it is unable to guarantee their right to life. There are three children born into the world every second. Their future is uncertain: poverty or comfort, ignorance or education, life or death.

But man is aware of the tremendous contrasts in the lives of the world's one-and-a-half billion children, and of the tragedy of those who are deprived of a future and doomed.

James P. Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), speaking on the condition of children in the world today, noted that every tenth child of the 122 million born in 1979 (International Year of the Child) has already died. Poverty was the cause of almost all of these 12 million infant deaths. Of the Earth's 4,000 million population, 780 million live in dire poverty, and 300 million of these are children. They do not have enough food to develop normally, either physically or mentally; they have not been inoculated against infectious diseases; they will never be examined by a doctor; and no more than 50 per cent of them will ever go to school.

There are hundreds of millions of children in the world who do not attend school. Even in a number of developed capitalist countries, the educational level is dropping. In the USA over two million school-aged children do not attend school.

Child labour is a widespread and deep-rooted evil. According to data provided by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), at least 54 million children are forced to work in order to survive. This means that the number of child labourers exceeds the 50-million adult army of unemployed in the world. This fact can be simply explained: children are a cheap and obedient labour force.

But people also understand that in order to improve the condition of children in the world today there must be peace on Earth. Every successful move in the struggle against war and the arms race brings closer that day when children in so many countries of the world will no longer have to suffer. Women have been fighting for this difficult cause since the end of World War II.

This is what my first interview is about.

One Moscow morning, on an invitation from Nina Popova, Member of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and winner of the International Lenin Prize "For Promotion of Peace Among Nations", I arrived at her flat on Komsomolsky Prospekt. She is an attractive and cheerful woman, despite her age and failing health.

We had tea and looked at photographs taken almost 40 years ago. One, taken in Paris in December 1945 at the World Women's Congress, is of Nina Popova and Eugénie Cotton, physicist and heroine of the French Résistance.

I began, "In the end of 1945 you participated in the inauguration of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) and were elected its first Vice-President. What were the aims of the Federation, and what was the atmosphere of its first Congress?"

"World War II, in which 50 million people died, had just ended. This determined the atmosphere in which the peoples of the world lived at the time. It can be characterised as follows: hatred of fascism, which was responsible for the war, and the people's desire to prevent a repetition of the tragedy. The Committee of Soviet Women was one of the

organisers of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).

"The World Women's Congress was held in Paris, in Mutualité Hall, and was attended by 850 delegates and guests from 42 countries. These were women of different nationalities, social backgrounds, political and religious views. Many of them were mourning the loss of relatives in the war. Some women in our delegation were in uniform and had military decorations. It looked as if they had just arrived from the fronts of the war, and this was actually so.

"Tsola Dragoicheva, a heroine of Bulgaria who was twice sentenced to death by the Nazis, sat next to me in the presidium of the Congress. I spoke to Marie Claude Vaillant-Couturier, who had been elected Secretary-General of the Federation. She was one of the few survivors of the Oświęcim death camp. I looked at them and thought of the wounds the Nazis had inflicted upon mankind.

"Eugénie Cotton, President of the Federation addressed the Congress: 'Our aim is to destroy fascism, ensure peace and democracy throughout the world, improve the status of women and work for a happy future for the coming generations.' These words would determine all WIDF activities.

"The Federation came to embody the idea of an international union of women dedicated to preventing a new war. Along with many other urgent social problems, the programme included a discussion of the pressing problems of the peace movement. No other women's organisation had ever set such broad goals."

"What about children? What is being done to assure their rights?"

"The most fundamental rights have been outlined in the Programme of the WIDF. These in-

clude the right to life, the right to free medical care, the right to a free education, and liberation from exploitation.

“The Federation, which works with the United Nations, helped to draw up the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Clauses and principles on education and the rearing of children, as drawn up by the WIDF, were included in the Declaration.

“Thinking back to that time, I believe that the idea of protecting children has united all progressive-minded people: those who are religious and those who are not, people of all races, statesmen and housewives. It has also allied all kinds of public organisations.

“Influenced by the constructive activities of progressive forces the United Nations unanimously adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It was signed by all 78 member-states.

“Thus began a new stage in the history of the movement to protect children.”

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a United Nations international legal document, was adopted on November 20, 1959. Its Preamble reads: “*Whereas* the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom... *Whereas* the child, by reason of

his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care... *Whereas* mankind owes to the child the best it has to give, *now therefore, the General Assembly proclaims* this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth..."

There are ten principal rights in the Declaration which stresses that a child must enjoy all the rights enumerated. Among them are: providing for all children, without exception and discrimination, every opportunity for physical, mental, and moral development, and the right to adequate food, housing, education, health, and protection from exploitation. The child must not be the object of trading. The humanitarian nature of the Declaration is expressed in its clause on the necessity for providing the child with love and understanding. It advocates the need for friendship among peoples, peace, universal brotherhood and for guaranteeing all children a happy future.

It would be naive to think that the mere adoption of this Declaration would solve all the problems of child welfare. Most are caused by the social inequality which still exists in a large part of the world, for the chasm between rich and poor is enormous.

However, the adoption of the Declaration by the UN General Assembly is highly significant. This international document on the protection of child welfare has become a criterion of social justice. The democracy and humanism of a society can be judged by its attitude towards its children.

Surveys conducted on a world-wide scale twenty years after the Declaration was adopted showed that its humane principles were still far from a rea-

lity in many countries of the world. Hundreds of millions of children still need protection and are still deprived of their rights.

Children continue to die from starvation, disease and exploitation. How can one speak of the development of the personality when millions of children have never seen a book in their lives. Or if, according to the policy of apartheid, the colour of a child's skin dooms him to an early death? The number of suicides among children ranging from 5 to 14 years of age doubled from 1964 to 1974. And there are cases of child alcoholism, drug addiction and prostitution, neglect and the corruption of children's minds by pornographic literature and movies.

Olga Chechyotkina, journalist, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee once said to me:

"I wish there were a radio station that would broadcast to the world the number of children that died every day and the countries they were from. Maybe then people who are concerned about children would sound an alarm and come running to save the life of every single child, as they do when they rescue children from a burning house."

Such an alarm has been sounded. In connection with the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the 31st Session of the UN General Assembly declared 1979 to be the International Year of the Child. Its chief objective was to draw the attention of governments and world public opinion to the crucial problem of improving the living conditions of children, and to outline ways and means of rendering urgent aid whenever it is needed.

As a result, national committees for implementing the programme of the International Year of the Child were formed in a number of countries, in-

cluding the Soviet Union. Its 65-member committee was headed by Nikolai Tikhonov, then Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers (now Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers). Valentina Tereshkova, the world's first woman cosmonaut and Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee, served as his deputy.

The work of this authoritative Soviet committee differed greatly from that of the committees established in the capitalist and developing countries. In the Soviet Union there is no private ownership of the means of production. Therefore, no social contrasts exist in the status of children. Concern for children is a question of state policy.

This does not mean, however, that there are no problems concerning the welfare of children in the USSR. For example, although over 13 million children attended nursery schools and kindergartens in the USSR in 1979 (today this number has increased), the demand for places exceeds the number available; in some republics the construction of pre-school establishments has fallen behind schedule; the available variety and quality of children's goods needs to be improved, the network of children's sports centres has not been sufficiently developed. These problems, to be solved in the future, appeared on the agenda of the committee.

At a meeting of the committee I learned that during the International Year of the Child new nurseries and kindergartens would accept 505,000 children.

Each year must be the Year of the Child! This is what we are still working for, twenty-five years after the signing of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

A Meeting with the President

I remember the day of September 7, 1979 when the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children" opened in the Hall of Columns at the House of Unions in Moscow. This is a beautiful white marble hall lit by cut-glass chandeliers. The conference, which was the focal point of the International Year of the Child, was organised by the Women's International Democratic Federation, one of the sponsors of the International Year of the Child. Freda Brown, President of the WIDF, headed the International Preparatory Committee.

I interviewed Freda Brown before she opened this historic forum.

A woman who has known much hardship in her life, Freda Brown began to work in a factory at the age of sixteen, actively participated in the trade-union movement and later became a journalist. During World War II she worked for a trade-union newspaper. For fifteen years she was President of the Union of Australian Women. My colleague, Pavel Penezhko, asked her: "What made you want to deal with acute international problems and become involved with social work on a world scale?"

"The national character of the Australian woman, if you like," she replied.

In the course of 1978-1979 Freda Brown travelled to 65 countries on various missions connected with the International Year of the Child. There was only one reason for such extensive travel: her concern for children and their interests. She was disgusted by the hypocrisy which masked an indifference towards children. Speaking at a press conference Freda Brown said that in some countries the Year of the Child was regarded as a year for amusing

children, and there were people who were happy to make a profit on it. Some owners of restaurants and shops hired children to sell soft drinks and dressed them in uniforms carrying the emblem of the Year!

The International Year of the Child was also a year for adults, a year of hard struggle to secure peace and happiness for children. The Year of the Child must serve as an impetus for increasing this struggle in the future.

At my first meeting with President of the WIDF I asked, "Children and the world today - what must people be most concerned with and most critical of?"

"Since this is the International Year of the Child and twenty years have passed since the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted, all of mankind, each country and every adult, must critically evaluate the existing situation: are we giving the children the best of what we have? Have we fully repaid our debt to them?"

"Have there been any positive changes in the condition of children in the past twenty years?"

"Naturally, there have been many changes in these twenty years. As a result of persistent effort, the legal status, as well as the living conditions of children in a number of countries, has been upgraded. In those countries where the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, children enjoy all the rights proclaimed in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Many Asian, African and Latin American countries freed from colonial oppression are working towards improving the health care system, education, and rearing of children and the youth. But at the same time the living conditions of the youngest citizens are still unbearable in many countries of the world."

“What are the results of the work that has been done in implementing the programme of the International Year of the Child in the last eight months?”

“Much has been accomplished during this period, beginning with the actual organisation of children’s establishments in various countries to the formulation and adoption of national laws. However, the main goal is to draw the public’s attention to the needs of children. Today, national committees have been set up in 153 countries of the world to carry out the programme of the Year of the Child. Their main concerns are the pressing problems concerning children, problems that demand immediate action.

“It should be noted that as a result of the inauguration of the Year of the Child, people are becoming more interested in the problems concerning children, not only in their own country, but in others, as well.”

“What are the main goals of the World Conference?”

“Its members will analyse the living conditions of children in various regions of the world and exchange experience in solving the problems concerning children; they will devise methods for increasing co-operation on a world-wide basis in the struggle for peace and security, national independence and development, social progress and the universal realisation of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.”

“What is the agenda of the conference?”

“We intend to discuss the following questions at the meeting of the four commissions:

“Commission No. 1: Economic, social and legal conditions necessary to guarantee the right of all children to life, health and well-being; the protec-

tion of mothers and children; the struggle to abolish child labour; the renewal of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the drawing up of a Convention.

“Commission No. 2: Free, compulsory education for all children; education in the spirit of peace, national independence and friendship; the responsibility of society, the role of the family, culture, recreation and sport in the all-round development of the child and youth’s personality; the role of the mass media.

“Commission No. 3: The protection of children living under extremely unfavourable social and political conditions.

“Commission No. 4: Aid to handicapped and retarded children, to orphans and the homeless.”

“This is an extensive programme for future action, but might the concern for children lessen after the end of the Year of the Child?”

“I believe that the International Year of the Child has had a very great influence on world public opinion. People who were formerly unaware of its ten principles have become familiar with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Public attention was drawn to the effects of the arms race on the social status of children on a world-wide scale. At present, the arms race consumes over one million dollars a minute. The construction of one Trident atomic submarine costs as much as the education of sixteen million schoolchildren. Five hospitals could be built with the money spent on one ballistic missile.

“These are not merely statistics, they are man’s tragedy.

“The Year of the Child makes people realise the fact that not only war in itself is fatal, but the preparations for it as well, since they deprive children

of a normal childhood, education, home and medical care.

“I would like to add that the Year of the Child coincides with the middle of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985). The problems of children cannot be dissociated from the problems of women. They are inseparable. I trust that the Year of the Child will continue after its formal end and that the problems it has brought to light will receive attention in the future, in close association with the work being done towards meeting the goals of the UN Decade for Women.”

“What would you like to say about your being named a Winner of the International Lenin Prize ‘For Promotion of Peace Among Nations’?”

“I was surprised at first. Then I felt very proud to have been honoured. The more so that this prize was awarded by the country that triumphed over fascism.

“I regard this great honour as recognition of the work being done by all women in the world towards preserving peace; I am just one of them.”

“You have had occasion to see for yourself the living conditions of Soviet children. What are your impressions?”

“I can answer that by saying that I wish my little grandson Rory had the opportunities Soviet children enjoy. In the USSR I saw wonderful nursery schools, kindergartens and schools. Children are taught humanism and friendship here. I have seen for myself that Soviet teenagers are absolutely positive that they will receive an education, a profession of their choice, and a job.

“Every time I find myself among your children, their happy, healthy faces make me think back to the suffering your people endured during World War II.”

Today is August 6th, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Paul Tibbets was a member of the crew of the American B-29 that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima in 1945. Almost four decades have passed since then, yet he is positive that he would do the same thing under the same circumstances. On the eve of Hiroshima Day the US Government ordered a thermonuclear bomb test.

...Through the window of my Moscow apartment I see a large green lawn at sunset and beyond, a road. I remember another lawn and another road. These were in Hiroshima in Peace Park at the memorial to the victims of the atomic bombing. An ocean of people—Japanese men, women and children—came to the memorial.

Today at eight o'clock in the morning Takeshi Araki, the Mayor of Hiroshima, will add a new list of names to the memorial. This time the list contains the names of 3,060 Hiroshima residents who have died in the past year from diseases caused by radioactivity. There are now 103,777 names under the grey flagstones, yet the list is incomplete, for no one knows the names of those tens of thousands who were incinerated by the blast.

Today, tens of thousands of people participating in Japan's twelve People's Marches to Hiroshima

have gathered at the memorial. They clasp their hands, lower their heads and repeat the epitaph engraved on the monument: "Sleep in peace, that will never happen again." They also voice their demands: "Ban All Nuclear Weapons!", "Stop the Arms Race!", "Japan Must Be a Non-Nuclear Power!"

This is an appeal made in memory of the victims, in the name of the future.

Japan is far from Moscow, but I feel I can still hear the mournful tolling of the bell rung by a young Japanese teacher whose relatives died in the blast.

In the Soviet Union the bells of Khatyn, a memorial complex erected in Byelorussia on the site of a village burned by the Nazis during World War II, are also tolling. On March 22, 1943 a Nazi punitive force drove all the inhabitants of Khatyn – the old people, women and children, and even a mother with a week-old infant – into a barn and set it on fire. Those who tried to escape were shot down.

Khatyn in Byelorussia, Lidice in Czechoslovakia and Oradour in France were the predecessors of Hiroshima. All share a common tragedy.

A huge sculptural group rises near the forest in Khatyn. Depicted is a tall, emaciated old man with a lifeless face and a dead child in his arms.

On the eve of August 6, participants of the Peace March (Stockholm-Helsinki-Moscow-Minsk) passed through the sombre streets of Khatyn. They sent a joint Appeal to the United Nations, to all governments, parliaments and peoples of the world that read in part: "...The time has come to turn from words to action in the field of disarmament. Together we shall triumph!"

On the day he arrived in Minsk L. Peterson of Norway said: "We wanted to look into your eyes

and try to understand what the Soviet people are like. We do not know much about you. We are told many untruths about the Soviet Union. The press stirs up fear and distrust between the peoples of the East and West.

"Before we set out on our march I was told that we would only meet grim people dressed in soldiers' uniforms. But look at this warm atmosphere! You know, I have more friends here than I have at home. Everyone here sincerely wants peace."¹

Paula Liinpe-Obenius, a teacher from Sweden, said: "Our group visited the Krasnaya Zarya industrial amalgamation (Leningrad). Our meetings with the people and the speeches we heard convinced us that the Soviet people are working for the common good. They know the horrors of war and will do everything possible to prevent a repetition of that tragedy."²

E. Safaneyeva of the Soviet Union, a former collective farmer and now a housewife, said: "My husband fought in World War II. Two of his brothers were killed in action. Two of my brothers also fought in the war; one took part in the Battle of Stalingrad, and the other was a scout. Both were killed. I remember the mass graves of thousands of people. My parents, two sisters and younger brother were all murdered by the Nazis and buried in a common grave.

"Today other barbarians who want to take the place of the Nazis are threatening us with missiles.

"As the mother of three children and the grandmother of four, I want to ask them: who gave them the right?

¹ *Pravda*, August 5, 1982.

² *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, August 8, 1982.

“Life is beautiful when it does not smell of gunpowder and when there are no tears in the mothers’ eyes. We want peace!”¹

These three interviews were printed in the Soviet press when nearly 2,000 champions of peace from over thirty countries, including Scandinavia, the Soviet Union, Greece, West Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Austria, Hungary, the United States and India were on their way to Vienna.

The international peace rally took place in the square in front of St. Stephen’s Cathedral in the centre of Vienna. Kiki Kuwano, a young Japanese woman representing the Hiroshima Group, Johanna Dohnal, Secretary of State to the Federal Chancellery (Family Planning) of Austria, and Valentina Milyukova of the Soviet Union all spoke. Each had the same message: “No more Hiroshimas!” and “If we don’t avert the catastrophe, the world will be a Hiroshima!”

David Brown, a sculptor from the USA, told Soviet journalist B. Orekhov, that he thought the Peace March was an historic event and that the peace movement had never before had such scope.

The rally was held in Vienna, but the people there did not hear Vienna’s great waltzes. They were listening to the insistent tolling of the bells of Hiroshima and Khatyn calling on mankind to prevent a new holocaust.

Children and the War

The delegates to the World Congress of Women (Prague, 1981), called the myth of the so-called Soviet war threat, invented by the imperialist prop-

¹ *Pravda*, August 8, 1982.

aganda machine, "the greatest lie of the 20th century". And now a new lie: peace advocates in the USSR are imprisoned. This libellous statement was reported widely in the Western press.

Let us not react with anger or surprise. The Soviet people suffered the horrors of World War II which devastated the country and cost millions of lives. Here is just one page from the chronicle of war, but it is sufficient to explain why the people of the USSR hate war.

This is a photograph from *Soviet Woman* magazine: It is a cold winter's day and the ground is covered with snow. A small boy, wrapped up in a shawl, is reaching out for his mother who is lying on the ground. He is about to touch her face. But his mother is dead. He does not yet understand what death means. A Nazi soldier has shot her for daring to make a small bonfire to warm her three small sons Alyosha, Tolya and Grisha Markovets. Dressed in rags, they lay huddled together.

The photograph was taken in March 1944 in Byelorussia, at the Ozarechi death camp which was liberated by the Soviet Army. It has become a symbol of human suffering.

The state brought up the murdered Byelorussian mother's children and gave them an education. They know that there is nothing worse than war. It is no wonder that children who were caught up in the war hate war. This is why so many Soviet people are active fighters for peace. This is why they stand for peace – openly and persistently – and are not imprisoned by the Soviet state, whose very first decree was Lenin's Decree on Peace, adopted in 1917.

* * *

Here is the story of another boy. He was thirteen when the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union. An ocean liner on the Murmansk steamship line was named after this young hero, and a monument to him has been erected in the city of Slavyansk. This is what A. Pilipenko of Chernigov, an officer who fought with Anatoly Komar in the 252nd Kharkov Red Banner Infantry Division, wrote forty years after this freckle-faced boy was killed in the war: his letter was reprinted in *Izvestia*:

“In September 1943 we took part in an offensive in the Ukraine, in the Poltava region. Our scouts met up with a thin, ragged, fifteen-year-old boy who knew the area well and offered to lead them to the enemy’s rear. In a surprise attack on the Nazi headquarters, the scouts seized important documents.

“When the scouts’ commander thanked the boy, Anatoly Komar asked for permission to join the unit as a soldier. Anatoly’s father was a soldier fighting at the front, and he himself had been held prisoner in the Nazi commandant’s office for four days and cruelly beaten for helping wounded Soviet pilots.

“At first, the divisional commander was hesitant about taking on the young volunteer, but he finally allowed the boy to become a scout with the special 332nd Reconnaissance Company. Thus did Anatoly Komar’s army life begin. He was soon awarded the Medal for Valour.

“Anatoly was always ready to carry out any assignment. Dressed in a tattered sheepskin coat, with a knapsack on his back, he made trips to the enemy’s rear. The Nazis were unaware that this skinny boy was a Soviet scout. Meanwhile, Anatoly was supplying HQ with important information.

“Once, when the division was fighting to the east

of Onufriyevka Village, a group of scouts was sent to the enemy's rear. They managed to seize a valuable topographic map on which enemy HQ, observation posts, and firing positions were marked. The scouts decided to return to their unit at once.

"They were discovered as they approached the front line, and the Nazis started to encircle them. A machine gun kept the scouts down, cutting off their retreat to the Soviet lines. Unnoticed, Anatoly crawled close enough to the machine gun to toss a hand-grenade at it. It seemed he had silenced it, but as the scouts rose, it started firing again, pressing them to ground once more. Then Anatoly stood up, ran to the machine gun and threw himself on it. He had saved his comrades, but he himself was fatally wounded.

"His commander and comrades wrote a letter to his mother. Here are a few lines from that letter: 'Our country will never forget our young soldier's name. He had the heart of a grown, brave soldier. He was a courageous defender of his Motherland.'"

Such is the memory of the horrors of the war. Children – future doctors, teachers, engineers and poets – are killed.

Who knows what kind of person this clever, selfless freckle-faced boy would have grown up to be?

* * *

The defence of Leningrad lasted 900 days and nights. Nearly 3 million people were trapped by the blockade including thousands of children. A documentary film in a serial on the Great Patriotic War is a frightful testimonial to the tragedy.

The film shows the children of Leningrad being evacuated as the blockade tightens. We see a crowd

of mothers putting their children on a boat, sure now that their children will be saved. But as the boat moves away from the shore it is attacked by a Nazi dive-bomber. The mothers helplessly watch the boat sink and their children drown. Soon only the children's white summer caps can be seen floating on the water.

The people of Leningrad also used the Road of Life across the ice of Lake Ladoga to help evacuate the city's residents. Over half a million people, primarily children, were evacuated from Leningrad in the winter of 1941-1942. The rest remained to live and work in the besieged city which was under constant bombardment and shelling. They were to suffer from the cold and die of starvation. The daily ration was 125 grammes of bread "which did not even smell like bread" (it was made of oilcake, food cellulose and pine needles). The poetess Olga Berggolts, addressed her fellow citizens of Leningrad over the radio: "Victory will be ours, and there will again be warmth, light and even happiness in Leningrad. And perhaps we shall one day see our daily bread ration, this tiny, miserable little piece of black bread, on display in some museum."

Leningrad fought on. During the blockade over 641,000 people died of starvation and 17,000 were killed by bombs and shells. Still, Leningrad resisted.

Many years later Ales Adamovich and Daniil Granin, both writers and veterans of the Great Patriotic War, compiled the *Blockade Book*. It contains 200 human tragedies related to them by citizens of Leningrad. The authors wrote:

"We were most interested in the source of the endurance, resistance and dignity the people displayed under the most desperate circumstances. These are always desirable qualities. We found that

the best way to discover these sources was to study personal diaries. Those people in Leningrad who kept diaries did not try to conceal anything—they did not know whether or not they would survive or what the future held for Leningrad and the rest of the country. Despite the famine, cold, shelling, loss of family, doubts and distress, we saw that their faith in victory grew from day to day.”

This is an excerpt from the diary of Lidiya Okhapkina, the mother of two small children:

“...Her crying is like moaning, and it drives me out of my mind. I give her [the youngest daughter] my blood to suck so that she should fall asleep. I have no milk in my breasts, and I do not have any breasts, everything has somehow disappeared. I prick my upper arm with a needle, and the baby sucks the wound weakly and falls asleep. I myself cannot fall asleep and start to count and become confused. I recall that in *War and Peace* Pierre Bezukhov also counted to a thousand to fall asleep...”

Yura Ryabinkin, a sixteen-year-old schoolboy who had studied in a history group led by Academician Tarle at the Palace of Young Pioneers before the war, also kept a diary. Yura did not become an historian in the usual sense of the word. Yet he might well be considered one by anyone who reads his diary:

“...Our corpses will decay, and our bones will turn to dust, but Leningrad will stand forever on the banks of the Neva, a proud and inaccessible city.

“...May there be a time on earth when not a single person will know what hunger of war is.”

What did he regret?

“...It is good to die knowing that you have accomplished everything you dreamt about in your

childhood and youth. It is good to die knowing that followers of your scientific and literary research remain. But still, it is so frightening."

Yura died during the blockade.

Children and war. The poet Alexander Tvardovsky, a veteran of the war, said: "It is difficult to imagine a more terrible combination of opposites than these two words."

The Mother Whose Son Was Killed

Andrei Krasnov, a nineteen-year-old lieutenant, was killed in action during the Great Patriotic War. A recent schoolboy from the Moscow region who became commander of a unit of the 743rd Infantry Regiment, Krasnov was fatally wounded in the abdomen during his first battle near the town of Kalach. He had won no medals or honours. He was one of millions. I later learned that six of his classmates named their sons after the young boy killed in 1942.

Andrei's parents Natalya and Fyodor Krasnov, a teacher and a surgeon, were both in service during the war. They could not put flowers on their son's grave when the war ended, for no one knew where he was buried, nor even whether he had been buried at all. But the flowers were placed on Krasnovs' behalf at the Volgograd Mamayev Kurgan Memorial which bears the inscription: "An iron hailstorm blew into their faces, yet they continued to advance. Again a superstitious fear gripped the enemy: are these real people? Are they mortals?"

If you visit Moscow's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Alexandrovsky Garden early in the morning when the city is still asleep, you will always find fresh flowers left by the families and friends of

those who died in the war. The sorrowing figure of Mother Russia at Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery in Leningrad has the following inscription: "We cannot list your names here; there are so many beneath the granite that preserves you now forever..." So many...

My country lays flowers at its monuments to the war dead and remembers its soldiers.

A two-and-a-half hour trip on the Moscow-Kolomna train brings me to a small suburban station. Here I walk along the highway, past the tram tracks and the dusty lilac bushes, past Secondary School No. 9 where Andrei Krasnov and I were both pupils, though he was a few grades ahead of me.

There is a brass name plate with the inscription "Dr. Fyodor Krasnov" on the door of Apt. 58 at 316 October Revolution St. It seems as if nothing has changed and no one has died. But Lt. Andrei Krasnov is dead, as is his father, an Honoured Doctor of the Republic, deputy of the town council, and bearer of the Order of Lenin. Natalya Krasnova, a slender, elderly woman with hazel eyes, opens the door. She is well over eighty and lives alone here now.

As I take off my coat and stand in the hall beside the lonely woman, I suddenly remember how happy her eyes used to be when the house was full of young people. Her eyes are still bright, and she is still very hospitable as she invites me in after my long journey.

Her son's piano with his music stacked on it, is silent. There is a near-completed home-made TV set, that pre-war wonder. Andrei's paintings: *Winter*, *The Overgrown Pond*, *Ducks Flying Over a Swamp* adorn the walls.

"Is it senseless of me to still be waiting for him?" his mother asks.

“Probably. Almost forty years have gone by.”

“But I’m still waiting. What if he rings the bell one day? He was such a wonderful boy. He was good at everything: he could draw, play the piano, the mandolin and the guitar. He was a good storyteller and took an interest in so many things. He was simple in his ways, intelligent and trusting. Andrei wasn’t very handsome, but he was kind and good-natured. And now he’s gone. I curse the day the war started, and the people who started it.”

Andrei Krasnov was born in 1923, the year of the fascist putsch in Munich, the year Adolf Hitler with his armed storm troopers broke into a Munich Beer Hall, fired his pistol, declared the beginning of the “national revolution”, and that he was assuming political power in Germany.

I enter Andrei’s room and open his diary. As he was drawing portraits of Heine and Beethoven, books were being burned in Germany; as he was composing his waltzes, modernised gas chambers were being designed for Oświęcim; and when, after he had organised a school band, and was busy playing the drum, cymbals and triangle, Germany had begun World War II and was on its way to occupying most of Europe.

He wrote:

“I can play Donizetti’s *Barcarole* by sight. What a magnificent piece! Both voices are in the bass key. One carries the melody, and the other accompanies it, like soft splashing water.

“I was sad and played the *Moonlight Sonata*. I feel that I can compose something myself.”

I read these pre-war entries and recalled the words of Ivan Yurokin, Andrei’s classmate and friend, and now a writer:

“He was not made for war. His character and ideals were so far removed from it. But he went off

to war, though he might have avoided active service. He could have gone to a quartermasters' school but he refused. He said, 'I want to be like everyone else.'"

Here is the music book with waltzes he composed. They are entitled: *Optimistic Waltz*, *Forest Fairies* and *Swallows*.

In 1940 he was the editor of the school wall newspaper, which was six metres long, and was entitled, *The Needle*.

The school band he conducted was invited as the best amateur group to perform in Moscow at the Hall of Columns. The write-up in the press called the members of the band "promising musicians". Their operetta, *The Jolly Cooks*, was a triumph. Andrei used to say: 'We write the music and we play it.' But he himself was the composer.

He loved to be among people, to constantly communicate with others. This was what endeared him to all who knew him. For the sake of the common good he said: "I want to be like everyone else."

"No one has been forgotten, nothing has been forgotten."

I study Andrei's face on the cover of *Seven Andreis*, a book written by Sergei Guskov, his classmate and a war veteran. "There are six of them, boys all named Andrei: the son of Galina Semyonova and Alexei Smetsky has large eyes and a high forehead; Andrei Yurokin - snub-nosed, with a cowlick and bright eyes which are slightly slanted. Natasha Sarafanova's son has arched brows and a delicate face... There are actually seven of them - together with the original Andrei who passed his name on them as a token, as their heritage."

Andrei Krasnov's mother died recently. She used to call the six boys named after her son her grand-

children, her future. They live in Moscow, Volograd, Yelets and Voronezh. Her grandchildren have grown up now and have their own children.

But, as Jacques-Yves Cousteau has written with great bitterness: "Each child born today receives a gift of four tons of trinitrotoluol from his fairy godmother."

The world's nuclear arsenal is now several million times that of the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. "Mankind is tired of sitting upon mountains of arms." (25th Congress of the CPSU.)

This is why the women of the Soviet Union fight against war with such determination and with such a sense of responsibility.

Bomber Crews Against Bombs

It took Yevgenia Zhigulenko 40 years to begin shooting her film. She started fighting German fascism as a night bomber during World War II and completed directing her anti-war feature film *Night Witches in the Sky* in the spring of 1981. Yevgenia Zhigulenko, Hero of the Soviet Union, was a "night witch" herself (that is what the Nazis called the fearless women bomber pilots) who flew 968 sorties during the war. She considers her film to be another sortie, a sortie against war.

Yevgenia Zhigulenko lives in a quiet section of Moscow where the still surface of a pond reflects the surrounding high-rise buildings. She is a woman of contrasts. Her eyes are dreamy, yet she has the large, strong hands once capable of piloting a bomber. She is soft-spoken, but has a military bearing. This is her story:

"At the start of the war I volunteered for active service, but was not accepted. Then I went to Mar-

ina Raskova, Hero of the Soviet Union, who was forming a women's air force regiment. She asked me if I wanted to fly with a bomber crew.

"Thus, I was enlisted in the 46th Air Force Night Bomber Regiment. I started out as a navigator and later became a pilot, and then a flight commander.

"During the war our regiment flew 24,000 sorties on 1,100 nights over the Caucasus, the Crimea, Byelorussia, Poland, and Germany. We saw Victory Day in Berlin. Only half of the regiment's personnel survived. Yet, how many other women were killed in other regiments, divisions and armies... Over one million Soviet women saw active service during the war."

"What decorations do you have?"

"The gold star of a Hero of the Soviet Union and the Order of Lenin, two orders of the Red Banner, the Order of the Great Patriotic War 1st Degree and two orders of the Red Star."

"What have you done in the years following the war?"

"After the war I searched for and found my fiancé, who was also a war veteran. We had not seen each other since the beginning of the war. We married and had a son, and I eventually received a college degree. We lived in the city of Sochi on the Black Sea Coast. I was elected Chairman of the City Executive Committee in charge of cultural matters. My husband's early death was a result of his war injuries. I was widowed and my son lost his father."

My Film Is About the War

"When I turned fifty, I realised that I might die and never accomplish the primary goal of my life. I believe that those who fought in the war have a spe-

cial obligation to the people. I spoke at industrial plants, schools, travelled to cities and villages throughout the country, visited the GDR, Cuba, Italy and Vietnam. I spoke over the radio and on TV of my hatred of war and of the necessity to fight for peace. But I felt this was not enough. I decided to depict war, the killer of mothers and children, in a film.

“I moved to a hostel in Moscow, got a job as a junior researcher in a cinema research laboratory, and enrolled in the State Institute of Cinematography to learn film directing. Sergei Gerasimov, a famous Soviet film director, was my teacher there.

“When did you graduate?”

“I got my diploma five years ago. Then I started working on the script of *Night Witches* with the dramatist Vladimir Valutsky. I tried to discuss many questions: What is war to a child and to a mother? To mankind? What is betrayal, fear and courage? At last, we began shooting the film.”

“What is it about?”

“It is the story of the girls of an air force regiment. At night they are formidable avengers, but in the daytime they are as feminine and vivacious as any other young girls. The two main characters are a pilot and a navigator, both of whom are killed in action. There is also a boy named Fyodor who has lost his mother in the war and who becomes attached to the two girls. The war kills future mothers, because a war shows no mercy—holds nothing in store for the human race but extermination.”

The poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko wrote a song for the film: “You think the stars are looking down at you, but it is we who are.”

**"Have Your Fellow Pilots
Seen Your Film?"**

I asked.

"They came to Moscow from all over the country. The premiere was sponsored by the Soviet Women's Committee. It was also a reunion for the former bomber crews. The women are now teachers, doctors, writers, mathematicians and historians. They have raised their children, and many now have grandchildren.

"Yevdokiya Bershanskaya, our regimental commander, has eight grandchildren. After seeing the film, she said: 'Our grandchildren are threatened by war. Today a nuclear holocaust has become a real threat. Imperialism is to be blamed. This film sounds an alarm. It seems like a documentary film, because it tells the truth.'

"One of the women, a doctor, said, 'A nuclear war, if it begins, will affect all aspects of life: people, animals, vegetation. Those who survive will envy the dead.' This is not speculation; it reflects the results of research carried out by a group of doctors who attended the International Congress of Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

"That is what a third world war will mean," Yevgenia Zhigulenko's voice hardened, "the end of human life.

"The same day my film was shown the women in my old bomber regiment appealed to the other women of the world. As war veterans, they called upon women from all countries of the world to prevent a nuclear catastrophe and to rise up in defence of life on earth, of all that is great and noble in civilisation, and to protect children. I am proud of having signed the appeal. As former bomber crews, and now as mothers, we are against the bombs."

**Valentina
Tereshkova:
We Must Preserve
This Small Blue
Planet**

Six Nemirovich-Danchenko St., Moscow, is the address of the Soviet Women's Committee. I often come here to meet women from other countries who are guests of the Committee. Today I have come to interview Valentina Tereshkova, Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee, Vice-President of WIDF, Cosmonaut of the USSR and Hero of the Soviet Union.

Tereshkova was the first woman in the world to orbit in space; she is a graduate of the Zhukovsky Air Force Academy. Her dissertation dealt with a specific problem of space flight.

Valentina was born in a village near the old Russian town of Yaroslavl. Her father was killed in action during World War II, and her mother was left with three children to bring up. Valentina graduated from school, worked in a tire factory, and then in a textile mill. All this time she was also attending the Yaroslavl Flying Club, where she made 163 parachute jumps and achieved the highest rank in parachute sports.

Georgy Beregovoi, Cosmonaut of the USSR and Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, speaks about Valentina Tereshkova:

"Valentina often speaks of the importance of saving our planet from the horrors of war. I think it quite logical that she became the head of the Soviet Women's Committee. On its behalf, on behalf of the women of the USSR and of herself as a mother and wife, she calls for peace and friendship among peoples.

“Woman is the source of all human life. Valentina Tereshkova, a woman who has seen the beauty of the Earth from outer space, is a strong advocate of the peace movement.”

I enter her study. My first question is:

“What were the aims of your organisation when it was founded?”

“The Soviet Women’s Committee was founded on September 7, 1941, at the First All-Union Meeting of Women in Moscow. It was originally named the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Women. The Nazis were advancing on Moscow, and it was at this difficult time that soldiers’ mothers and wives, service women and women working for the war effort at home met at the first Committee meeting. The Committee had one aim: to unite all women in the struggle against the Nazi invaders, to set up a united, international anti-fascist front.

“The meeting called upon all Soviet women to rise up in defence of their Motherland, to replace the men in the factories and on the collective farms. The meeting also drew up an appeal to the women of the world: ‘We address you on behalf of all Soviet women regardless of your political views, religion, or social status. Our freedom and the fate of our children, husbands and brothers depend on us. We appeal to your hearts and your minds in the face of the common danger threatening all civilised humanity. Our unity is an earnest of victory!’

“Thus, the foundations were laid for co-operation between the women of the Soviet Union and progressive women’s organisations and movements in other countries whose aim was to preserve mankind and the lives of all children. The peoples of the world cannot forget the numerous victims, the untold suffering and horrors of the concentration camps of World War II. The war cost the lives of

tens of millions of people, including 20 million Soviet citizens."

"Does the Committee maintain contacts with women's organisations abroad?"

"In the interest of peace and mutual understanding, the Committee maintains contacts with 250 national, regional and international women's organisations in over 120 countries. We exchange information and delegations, photo-exhibits, films and books on the status of women and children, and jointly participate in various international meetings.

"The Committee continues to strengthen its ties with women's organisations in other socialist states. A similar economic order in our countries has established similar ways and means of solving the woman issue. However, each socialist state develops along its own specific lines and has gained its own experience in dealing with the woman issue. An exchange of this experience enriches the work of the women's organisations in the countries of the socialist community.

"The Committee also develops relations with women's organisations in capitalist countries. It maintains close ties with women's organisations in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our Committee renders comprehensive aid to the women's organisations in the newly independent states of Africa and Asia, which are now in the process of overcoming the grim legacy of imperialism, illiteracy, poverty and disease. Soviet women tell them of their country's experience in wiping out illiteracy. They help to equip public centres for women, and children's establishments. Today 867 young women from 62 Asian, African and Latin American countries are studying in the USSR and receiving stipends from the Committee.

Upon graduation they will become doctors, teachers, lawyers, agronomists and engineers."

"What can you say about the Committee's activities in connection with the UN Decade for Women?"

"In the 1970s the Committee dealt extensively with issues connected with International Women's Year, the UN Decade for Women and the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The Soviet Union signed and ratified this document in 1980.

"The Committee took part in organising a number of important public forums within the framework of the Year and Decade: The World Congress of Women (Berlin 1975), World Conference entitled "For a Peaceful and Happy Future for All Children" (Moscow, 1979), and the Forum of Nongovernmental Organisations (Copenhagen, 1980).

"The Committee worked hard to help organise and conduct the World Congress of Women "For Equality, National Independence and Peace" (Prague, October 1981).

"The Prague Congress was called by the WIDF and supported by the United Nations and its commissions. Representatives of 275 national organisations from 133 countries and 96 international organisations of various political orientation supported a resolution of the women of the world to fight against the arms race. They expressed their concern and determination to control the arms race and avert a nuclear catastrophe while this was still possible.

"The members of the World Congress called upon the UN and its member states to make every effort to fulfil their chief obligation: to preserve and strengthen peace and avert the danger of a nuclear

war. They urged the women of the world to participate in joint actions against the arms race."

"What is the focal point of the Committee's activities today?"

"The struggle for peace. Soviet women have expressed their full support of the Peace Programme adopted at the 24th Congress and further developed by the 25th Congress of the CPSU. They approve of the Peace Programme for the 1980s worked out by the 26th Congress of the CPSU. This programme proposes setting up peace zones in different parts of the world and reducing nuclear and conventional armaments, and is directed towards ensuring detente and developing peaceful co-operation among all nations.

"The Soviet Women's Committee is one of the founders of the Soviet Peace Fund which receives voluntary donations from citizens who wish to contribute to the peace cause.

"Our Committee drew scores of Soviet women into helping to collect signatures under the New Stockholm Appeal for stopping the arms race and for disarmament (1975). We have taken an active part in many international events. To name but a few: the International Liaison Forum of Peace Forces (1977), the International Conference of Nongovernmental Organisations for Disarmament (1978) and the International Seminar 'Women and Disarmament' (1978).

"The Committee participates in the campaigns and meetings of the World Peace Council and the Women's International Democratic Federation, both of which have launched a broad movement against the neutron bomb and other weapons of mass annihilation.

"The Soviet Women's Committee sent a delegation to the World Parliament of Peoples for Peace

which was held in Sofia in September 1980. It was decided here to establish October 25th as International Women's Day for Disarmament – a decision which was widely supported among the women's organisations of the USSR."

"I think there is a connection between the Committee's peace activities and the task of improving the conditions of children throughout the world. What is your opinion?"

"Each of us realises that the struggle for peace, security, disarmament, national freedom and social progress is inseparable from the implementation of the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations twenty-five years ago. Its principles are most clearly expressed in the motto: "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give."

"This is why the Soviet Women's Committee, calling upon all women of the world who are concerned with the happiness of children, asks each of us to make a contribution to the peace cause."

Conversation at Hammarskjold Square

"THE RIGHT TO LIFE. Article 3 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, is surely for the child the most fundamental right of all..."

"We must direct attention of all who love children to the effect of the arms race on the child. It deprives them physically, it affects them psychologically. Fascist regimes openly encourage the child to be militarists; but in too many countries a subtle process seeks to prepare the child for the violence of war..."

"All our work for a better life for children, a better life for all, is nothing without peace," said Freda Brown, President of the WIDF.

"...My observation in this country (the USSR - Ed.) is that its government and its people are dedicated to peace."

Since the end of World War II the Soviet Union has made over one hundred proposals directed at preserving and strengthening peace. At the Second UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament the Soviet Union made a new proposal: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics pledges not to be the first to use nuclear weapons."

"This is a historic decision," Andrei Gromyko, First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, said at a press conference in New York. "Attempts are being made to belittle the importance of this decision. But it should be stressed that these attempts are futile. The Soviet Union's decision will be written down in history in golden letters."

Valentina Tereshkova said in her speech at the UN Session:

"...Aggressive imperialist circles are trying to gain military supremacy. That is why the process of detente which in the previous decade gave the peoples new hope for the future has been impeded.

"They are trying to get the people of the world to accept the monstrous idea of employing weapons of mass destruction, the various doctrines of 'limited nuclear warfare', the possibility of the so-called demonstration blows.

"The women of the world are greatly concerned because, according to the UN data, world military expenditures will amount to over 500 billion dollars by 1980. And this is at a time when 570 million peo-

ple in the world are undernourished, when half of the child mortality rate in the developing countries is due to starvation, when 1.5 billion people do not have access to medical care, when 800 million people are illiterate, and when 250 million children do not attend school. According to the World Health Organisation, 25 per cent of the total world military expenditures would be enough to liquidate all slums, eliminate illiteracy and provide education for all children.

"The Women's International Democratic Federation expresses the will of many millions of women in the world and calls upon the nuclear states to follow the Soviet Union's example and pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. This would eliminate the threat of a nuclear holocaust."

Why then are there still claims about a so-called Soviet military threat, why don't the other nuclear states follow the Soviet Union's example?

It is worth noting that at the Second UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament peace fighters proclaimed their desire to achieve peace and handed a petition signed by 90 million people to the UN Secretary-General.

When the Special Session on Disarmament was meeting, a hundred feet from UN headquarters at Hammarskjold Square, about twenty Soviet and American schoolboys were conversing. V. Pakhomov, a Soviet journalist, overheard their conversation. One of the boys remembered a film he had seen about the atomic blast in Hiroshima.

Lenny said: "I'm ten years old, but I want to live till I'm old." Dima, a boy from Moscow, said: "Everyone remembers the horrors of World War II. Even we know about them. There won't be anyone to remember World War III."

Out of the mouths of babes...

The Soviet Union's pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons affects every person, guaranteeing him a right to life, his fundamental right. In flagrant contradiction to this is the position of Samuel Cohen, physicist and designer of the neutron bomb, who once remarked that every man secretly longs for war. Strausz-Hupé, William Kintner and Stefan Possóny, reactionary American bourgeois ideologues, have stated that their chief goal is the liquidation of communism, not the preservation of peace at any cost.

The concrete actions of the Soviet Union disprove the myth of a "Soviet military threat", the greatest lie of the 20th century.

I recall the words of Jorge Amado, a Brazilian writer:

"...In this troubled and most dangerous time, I appeal to you, the Land of Soviets, my Mother, Sister and Beloved. In this dark hour I call to you, I repeat your name, in which I hear the gentleness of a butterfly and the courage of an eagle, the scent of flowers and the thunder of a storm, and when I say 'USSR' I hear the echo of the peoples' voices, repeating your name, the symbol of PEACE... Hope and the sweetness of peace spring from you; faith in man and love spring from you. You are a wondrous reality, you are made of flour and milk, of wheat and songs, of coal and oil, of books and flowers, of factories and collective farms, and each rejoices in you and will be happier still tomorrow. You are men and women, heroes, workers. Lenin created you..."¹

¹ Jorge Amado, *O Mundo da Paz. União Soviética o Democacias Populares*, Editorial Vitoria, Rio de Janeiro, 1953, pp. 204-05.

The Constitution of the USSR: A Reflection of the Charter of the Child

The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union reads in part: "...To ensure the education from early childhood of a sound young generation, harmoniously developed physically and spiritually..."

"A happy childhood for every child is one of the most important and noble aspects of communist construction."

During all stages of building a new society the Party has consistently worked towards fulfilling this task.

Laws protecting the interests of the younger generation were passed during the first days of the existence of the Soviet State. Thus, on the fourth day after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution (1917) the Soviet Government issued a special decree forbidding child labour under 14 years of age.

The Decree on Civil Marriage, Children and Keeping Registers, for the first time in the world, granted full political and civil rights to the illegitimate child. The first code adopted by Soviet Russia, the Family Code (1918) stated in part that adults have obligations towards their children.

These first laws laid the foundations for developing child welfare legislation in the Soviet state.

In the summer of 1919 Lenin summarised the work done in this field: "We really razed to the

ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws, numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field."

In 1920 Lenin pointed out:

"We are setting up public kitchens and dining halls, laundries, repair shops, nurseries, kindergartens, children's homes and various establishments for bringing up children... We have the most modern legislation on women's occupational safety.. Representatives of organised workers are putting it into effect. We are setting up maternity homes, mother-and-child homes, organising health centres for mothers, infant and child care courses, and exhibitions devoted to the protection of mothers and infants..."

"This is a good beginning. We have taken the right course and will consistently put all our energy into developing it further."

Soviet legislation has developed on a democratic basis, for the new laws are drawn up not only by lawyers and experts, but by the people as well.

Here are some examples: The following entry, dated 1918, was written in the Visitors' Book in the waiting room of Lenin's Kremlin study: "A working woman suggested a draft decree on maternity leave." Lenin wrote the following comment beside it: "To the appropriate authorities at the People's Commissar of Labour."

When the Law on State Pensions was being drawn up in 1956, a group of women from the Ukrainian city of Donetsk wrote a letter to the

Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It reads in part: "Please take into consideration the fact that we women hold jobs and are active in civil affairs, raise children and are homemakers as well. That is why we feel that the present retirement age for women (55 years of age) should be lowered for mothers of large families."

A corresponding amendment was introduced into the law on state pensions. It reads:

"Women who have given birth to five or more children and have brought them up to the age of eight have a right to receive an old-age pension on attaining the age of 50, having worked no less than a total of 15 years."

Here is another fact: During the nation-wide discussions of the Draft of the new Constitution of the USSR (adopted in October 1977), which retained and further developed the basic features of a constitution of a socialist type (its articles are based on the first Soviet laws and on the first Soviet Constitution of 1918), the people submitted hundreds of thousands of suggestions. Thus, for instance, Article 35 of the Constitution incorporated two new clauses on the protection of women and children.

The first amendment was on "providing conditions enabling mothers to work" and is an extremely important and necessary correction. It reflects the state's concern for a woman being able to remain a socially useful member of society while being a mother. This amendment makes it possible to eliminate the remnants of women's inequality in everyday life. A law is a law, and it must be enforced. This law is directed at accelerating the construction of nurseries and kindergartens, improving their quality, and increasing the range of communal services provided.

The problem of combining work and rearing children is a complex one. I have touched upon just

a few of its aspects. Zoya Pukhova, a former weaver who is now the director of a textile mill, related how the second amendment to Article 35 of the Constitution of the USSR was introduced:

"I was a member of the Constitutional Commission, participating directly in drawing up the Constitution. I felt that working mothers should have more time to devote to their families. As deputies of the Supreme Soviet we received many letters from women on this subject.

"That is why at the Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Valentina Tereshkova and I proposed that Article 35 be amended to allow 'a gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children'.

"These words are now written into the Constitution of the USSR."

* * *

Alevtina Fedulova, Secretary of the Central Committee of the YCL, said: "In the years of Soviet power the Constitution of the USSR has shaped the attitude of society towards children. The Constitution not only grants the broadest human rights to adults, it also provides conditions for the harmonious development of the personality in childhood and youth."

Practically all the articles of the Constitution are related to child welfare, and not only those which are specifically devoted to the family, education, medical care, recreation and the all-round development of the child's abilities and talents. Articles granting equality to citizens regardless of nationality, race, or sex, the right of the Soviet people to work and to housing; articles setting down the principles of democracy, internationalism, and respect

for the honour and dignity of the individual, all have an important influence upon the conditions under which all Soviet children are brought up. Figuratively speaking, every line of the Constitution shows concern for the children of the USSR. If the articles of the Constitution of the USSR are compared with the ten principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, one can see that the UN document is fully embodied in the Fundamental Law of the USSR. These principles have become laws; moreover, their implementation is guaranteed by a society of developed socialism.

The Constitution is most concerned with the welfare of children, providing them with the right to an education, to physical and spiritual development, and giving them the opportunity to take advantage of the wealth of society and enjoy the care of adults.

Article 42 (on the right of citizens of the USSR to health protection) prohibits child labour and stresses the need for special care of the future generation.

Article 45 proclaims the right to free, universal, compulsory secondary education, vocational, specialised secondary and higher education and the right to attend a school where classes are conducted in the native language.

Article 53 states that "the family enjoys the protection of the state. ... The state helps the family by providing and developing a broad system of child-care institutions, by organising and improving communal services and public catering, by paying grants on the birth of a child, by providing children's allowances and benefits for large families."

Article 66 makes it obligatory for "citizens of the USSR to concern themselves with the upbringing of children, to train them for socially useful work and

to raise them as worthy members of a socialist society". It should be noted that during the discussion of the Draft Constitution the following amendment to the article was proposed by the young: "Children are obliged to care for their parents and help them." This amendment was also adopted by the Supreme Soviet.

Concern for the individual, his well-being and his future underlie the policy of Soviet government. Children in the USSR are "the most privileged class" of society. "The best that we have is for our children". This slogan has become a law of socialism. It was proclaimed at the inception of the Soviet state, over four decades before the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted in the late 1950s, and has remained in force ever since. It has much in common with the Declaration's principle of "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give."

The ten principles of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (the child shall be given opportunities to enable him to develop physically and mentally in a healthy and normal manner; the child is entitled to receive an education, live free of exploitation, etc.) were adopted by the Soviet state decades before.

Principle 2 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child points to a problem that has yet to be solved:

“The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.”

Let us recall those first years of the Soviet state. From the very outset it was confronted with the problem of child protection, for tsarist Russia had left a grim legacy of famine, homeless children, illiteracy and diseases. The country had one of the highest child mortality rates in the world.

The concern for the health, upbringing and education of the younger generation became a matter of national importance. For the first time in history, a new unique system of state establishments for the protection of child welfare was set up, and a new policy of protecting the child’s health and life was introduced. Three months after the victory of the October Revolution the People’s Commissariat for Social Security issued a Decree on Organising a Commission for the Protection of Young Children.

All these programmes were implemented under Lenin’s guidance.

The Child and Hunger: The Problem and Its Solution

At a time when the Soviet country was repelling foreign intervention, fighting counter-revolutionary forces and economic ruin, rescuing children from hunger and disease became a state policy.

Zoya Vodopianova, an historian, showed me some archives of the period. One document reads: "We must wage a war to protect children from the threat of death." And so a war against hunger was declared.

N. Semashko, People's Commissar for Public Health, recalled what Lenin said at the time: "We adults can go hungry, but we must give the children the last pinch of flour, the last lump of sugar, and the last pat of butter. Adults must shoulder these trying times. We must do everything possible to spare the children."

The Soviet Government passed a number of decrees relating to food for children. On September 14, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR adopted the Decree on Increasing Food Supplies for Children. A week later it issued the Decree on the Children's Food Fund. On October 8 of the same year the People's Commissariat for Food published a decision for providing children and the sick with chocolate and cocoa.

In February 1919 Lenin signed a decree on the establishment of the Council for Child Protection. It included representatives of the following commissariats: Social Security, Education, Public Health, Food, and Labour. A. V. Lunacharsky, People's Commissar of Education, was Chairman of the Council.

On May 17, 1919 Lenin signed the Decree on Free Food for Children, according to which the children of 16 regions that were famine areas were to receive food free of charge. The previous decrees were directed towards improving the food supply for children, while this decree provided a radical solution to the problem. In the autumn of the same year the Soviet Government adopted a law establishing a wide network of free cafeterias for children.

The force of a law is measured by the degree of its implementation. The newly established Council for Child Protection began introducing food supply laws for children. A month after the Decree on Free Food for Children was adopted, children under five years of age in Moscow were receiving free rations of cereals, sugar, milk products, salt, eggs and bread. Other children were regularly fed in free cafeterias. In famine-gripped Petrograd (now Leningrad) 80 per cent of all children were fed in such cafeterias. At school the children were given a hot meal.

There were 4,200 children's cafeterias in the republic by the end of 1920, and a total of 8 million children were receiving free meals.

This was all made possible because the entire population was participating in the campaign to help feed the younger generation. The Decree on the Week of the Child was signed on October 7, 1920. In accordance with this decree, all children's establishments were renovated and began receiving more food and fuel; shoes and clothes were distributed among the children; sick and ailing children were sent to hospitals and sanatoriums, many of which were housed in the former estates of the rich; factory workers toiled overtime, donating the extra money they received to a children's fund; peasants

and Red Army soldiers set up food collections for children.

The peasants of Voskresenskoye Village declared that they would not watch children starve and would start collecting bread for them. Saratov, a grain-rich city on the Volga sent nearly one hundred freight cars of food to children in the famine-stricken cities of Russia.

A wide range of measures directed at combatting the famine helped to save the lives of an entire generation. For the first time in history concern for a country's children became a matter of state policy. Soviet power, which was engaged in a struggle against classes hostile to the Revolution—the nobility, landowners, bourgeoisie—did not deny any children, for all of the country's children, regardless of social origin, were to be rescued from hunger and social disaster.

The historical experience of the Soviet Union proves that the problem of "children and hunger" is not unsolvable. An alliance between state policy and public activities provided a successful solution to the problem.

Children Teach Their Mothers to Read and Write

Illiteracy was another enemy of the child: in pre-revolutionary Russia only 28.4 per cent of the population in the 9 to 49-old age group were literate and 86.3 per cent of all women were illiterate. This meant that children were being brought up by illiterate mothers. Forty nationalities inhabiting the country lacked a written language.

I asked Lyubov Balyasnaya, Deputy Minister of Education of the RSFSR and a member of the

Soviet Women's Committee, to comment on this:

"I recently saw the payroll of one of Russia's textile mills in the archives of the Museum of History. It dates from the eve of the October Revolution. The sheet of paper was marked with long lines of 'X's'. There were few signatures, for most of the workers were women who could not even sign their names.

"The illiterate were naturally barred from skilled jobs. Working women had to be satisfied with jobs of laundresses, cleaning women, cooks, seamstresses, maids and farm workers."

"What were the first steps taken to wipe out illiteracy?"

"The establishment of a new school system: co-educational, free and providing universal compulsory primary education, with teaching in the child's native language.

"Social and national discrimination was eliminated. This was of especial importance to the children from working class and peasant families, and to nationalities which formerly lacked a written language.

"In Volume II of her *Pedagogical Notes* Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and comrade, and an outstanding Party and state figure wrote: 'The bourgeoisie and the working class both have certain goals for the school system, but the bourgeoisie regards the educational system as a weapon of class domination, whereas the proletariat regards it as a means of bringing up a generation capable of putting an end to class domination. The bourgeois state aims at suppressing the personalities of the majority of children and lulling their class consciousness. These aims are counter to the interests of the younger generation. The aims set for the school by the working class lead to the development

of every child's personality, mental outlook and class consciousness. These goals reflect the interests of the younger generation. Such is the difference between the goals of the bourgeoisie and the goals of the proletariat.¹

"Krupskaya's views on education, which stressed the close interrelation between the school and home, became widely accepted. Thus, she determined the goals of child rearing:

"The population is interested in the primary, secondary and higher school having a common goal: that of educating harmoniously developed citizens with conscientious and organised social instincts, possessing an integrated, rational world outlook and having a clear understanding of the events which take place in nature and social life; people who have been prepared in theory and practice to do all kinds of work, both physical and mental, and who are capable of creating a sensible, complete, beautiful and happy public life. Such people are needed by socialist society. Without them socialism cannot be fully realised."²

"The Decree on the Eradication of Illiteracy signed by Lenin in 1919 and the work of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Eradicating Illiteracy helped all the country's peoples to advance towards literacy and education. During the first three years of Soviet power, 7 million people learned to read and write.

"At the same time, the democratisation of the system of higher education was begun. Young people from working-class and peasant families were

¹ N. Krupskaya. *Pedagogical Notes* in 6 volumes, Vol. 2, Pedagogika Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 173 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

granted certain privileges when entering establishments of higher learning. Special preparatory departments were set up for working youth at institutes and universities, the so-called Workers' Faculties. Since the educational level of women at the time was lower than that of men, the former were given additional privileges and places were reserved for them."

"What can you say about the results?"

"During the twenty years of peace time (1920-1940) 50 million people became literate. The 1959 Census revealed that the Soviet Union had become a country of universal literacy.

"When I think back to the time these changes began, I recall a skinny boy with cropped hair dressed in his father's old jacket. I can see him sitting in class and writing his first sentence on a piece of wallpaper (there was a shortage of paper at the time): 'We are not slaves.' He smiles and looks up at the photographer in surprise, never suspecting that his face has now become a part of his country's history.

"In those days children, who are usually quicker to learn than adults, taught their mothers and grandmothers to read and write. The motto at the time was: 'Every literate person, teach an illiterate one.' "

Solving the Problem of Homeless Children

World War I, the Civil War and the following famine and economic ruin orphaned and left homeless 4.5 million children. Felix Dzerzhinsky, an outstanding Soviet statesman and Party leader, wrote: "The problem of homeless children, which often reveals itself in such ugly and terrible forms as juvenile delinquency and prostitution, threatens the

growing generation with dire consequences.”¹

Soviet power passed special laws to protect minors and set up a network of institutions to solve the problem of homeless children. In February 1921 a Commission for Improving the Life of Children was organised to deal with the homeless and to help children in general. Dzerzhinsky, who had volunteered to be the chairman of this Commission, said: “The gains of the revolution are for them, not for us. Yet, so many children have been crippled by struggle and poverty. We must hasten to rescue them as if these were drowning.”² He wrote a letter to the Cheka officials of the country which reads in part: “Caring for the children is the best means of exterminating counter-revolution.”

Dzerzhinsky helped to bring in homeless children from back streets, yards and basements. Early one morning he came upon an emaciated boy in tattered clothes who was seeking shelter in an old asphalt cauldron and took him to a children’s home. Nikolai Dubinin, the former waif, became a world-famous geneticist.

During the first two years of its existence the Commission established hundreds of children’s homes and work colonies in which orphaned children and adolescents were surrounded with care and attention.

The Commission appealed to the population to come to the aid of the country’s children: “No matter how modest your contribution, remember that only the joint efforts of the working class and the peasantry will help win this struggle for the children’s future.”

¹ F. Dzerzhinsky, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1947, p. 148 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.* p. 144.

The Week of the Homeless and Sick Child was observed throughout the country. Its goal was to place all waifs in children's homes and to inspect the conditions under which the wards of the state lived. People donated money, food, clothing, shoes and books to a special children's fund; they helped renovate children's establishments and tried to provide for all their essential requirements. The Lenin Fund for Aiding Homeless Children played an important role in carrying out the above measures.

Homeless children and adolescents were first placed in receiving centres under the care of teachers and doctors, and were then assigned to children's establishments.

The number of these establishments—children's homes of various types, work colonies and communes (which prepared the young people for socially useful labour) grew rapidly.

When my colleague Valentina Lanina and I were studying this problem, we came across the following data: in 1917 there were 30,000 children in children's homes; by 1919 the number had risen to 125,000, and by 1922 it was 540,000.

It is obviously easier to bring a child up properly than to try to correct character flaws. Nadezhda Krupskaya wrote: "It is no simple matter to bring up children who are embittered and sick, and who have for years been involved in a struggle for survival and living in an atmosphere of debauchery. What is needed here is tact, talent, a keen eye and a readiness to come to the aid, to support and make the voice of the social instinct sound louder."

Two decisions of the Soviet Government were of great importance in solving the problem of homeless children: a decision on measures for preparing children in children's homes for socially useful labour (1925), and a decision stipulating the terms

under which children in children's homes could be taken into peasant families to prepare them for agricultural labour (1926).

Such patronage, which first appeared on a voluntary basis, soon became regulated by the state. A peasant family which took in a homeless child signed an official agreement with the local government body. The foster parents undertook to care for the child as they did for their own children, to give the child a chance to study and to learn agricultural work. The state, in turn, gave the foster parents certain privileges (a special grant, an additional tax-free plot, etc.).

The Young Communist League, the trade unions and women's organisations all played a leading role in dealing with the problem of homeless children. A voluntary society, The Friends of Children, which united over one million activists: workers, teachers, scientists, cultural workers and Party and other officials, was founded.

As the years went by, the number of children's establishments for homeless children in the USSR began to decline: in 1923 there were 3,971 such establishments, whereas by 1928 there were 1,922.

The one-time waifs studied in technical schools and institutes, and helped to build factories, dams for hydroelectric power stations, and new cities.

By the mid-1930s the problem of homeless children was completely solved. Anton Makarenko, a leading Soviet pedagogue, noted: "The struggle to reclaim vagabond children, which stirred such gloating and slander among our enemies, proved that Soviet society does not spare any effort to provide for the welfare of its children. It achieves this goal without humiliating the child, and while displaying full respect for him as an individual."

Klara Zetkin, an outstanding figure of the inter-

national communist movement, said that the attitude of the young Soviet state towards its youth could put the old and rich bourgeois nations to shame.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist and Professor at Cornell University who has visited the USSR several times, wrote:

“How can we judge the worth of a society? On what basis can we predict how well a nation will survive and prosper? Many indices could be used for this purpose, among them the Gross National Product, the birth rate, crime statistics, mental health data, etc. In this book we propose yet another criterion: *the concern of one generation for the next.*”¹

Anton Makarenko's Method of Explosion

I became interested in Anton Makarenko's works after reading his book, *The Road to Life*, in my youth. It was extremely popular then, as it is among young people today; I then went on to read his other books: *Learning to Live*, *A Book for Parents* and *Selected Pedagogical Writings*.

I have always liked to study photographs of Makarenko, perhaps because I feel there is a certain compressed force in his ordinary face, a secret difficult to put into words, a true personality. He had prominent cheekbones, a moustache and the keen eyes of a pedagogue and writer behind steel-rimmed glasses. He usually wore a soldier's field shirt or a worker's high-collared, side-fastened blouse.

¹ Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood, U.S. and U.S.S.R.*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1971, p. 1.

When he was seventeen, Makarenko started working as a teacher in a railroad vocational school in Kryukov on the Dnieper. This was in 1905, the time of the first Russian revolution, a time when the power of the capitalists was being undermined and the road was being paved for the victory of socialism in the country. Makarenko's political outlook was shaped by revolutionary ideas. He looked to the future, to a time of social change and the downfall of the Russian tsar. The young teacher rebelled against the school's headmaster, a "dishonest obscurantist", as he called him. As punishment, Makarenko was sent off to remote Dolinskaya Station in the steppe.

Makarenko later recalled, "The socialist revolution suddenly opened up unprecedented opportunities for developing an individual who was free. It opened up great possibilities in my pedagogical work."

How Is a New Type of Individual Created?

The new society was faced with such a problem.

The teacher from Dolinskaya Station decided to create "a general, universal method which would make it possible for every individual to develop his specific qualities and preserve his individuality."¹ Makarenko began "seeking ways to create a new, Soviet pedagogics". The following are some of his ideas:

"...A socialist society is based on the principle of collectivism. There must be no solitary individual,

¹ Here and heretoafter quotations are made from A. Makarenko, *Selected Pedagogical Writings*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1977 (in Russian).

who either sticks out like a sore thumb or is ground to dust, but members of a socialist collective."

"...Teacher plus pupil. I repeat that such a combination does not exist. There is a school, an organisation, a collective, a general course for all pedagogical work. And if your school has a correct course, a correct attitude and a correct collective, there is no reason to be afraid of risks, furthermore, every risk is indispensable and possible."

"...A group of teachers and a group of pupils are not two collectives, but one, and, moreover, a pedagogical collective."

"In the old schools punishment was a mere act of violence. It did not solve the conflict, but only increased it, driving the evil deep inside. Our system of punishment, however, is neither merciless nor humiliating to the pupil's dignity. It will undoubtedly play a positive role.

"A sensible system of penalties is not only right but necessary. It helps to form a stable character, cultivates a feeling of responsibility, trains the will-power and dignity and develops the ability to withstand temptation and overcome it."

"My basic principle (I believe it to be the basic principle of all Soviet teachers) was always the following: to demand much of the person, but also to show him a good deal of respect. These two principles, as a matter of fact, are one and the same in our outlook on life: one cannot demand much of a person one does not respect; when we demand much of a person, we display our respect for him by simply making the demand; we respect him because this demand is fulfilled."

"Why Are All Your People Beautiful?"

In September 1920 Anton Makarenko, then 32, became the director of the Maxim Gorky Children's Colony, an educational establishment for juvenile delinquents. He assumed the responsibility for many lives distorted by the war, poverty and loss of family. Young thieves and pickpockets were sent to the colony. The talented teacher's dedicated struggle for the child's soul was begun.

The following are some of the most important beliefs Makarenko held: "I was never tempted to think that after committing a crime a child becomes criminally warped, nor to develop a method based on such an assumption. This is due to my trust in people or, rather, to my love for people.

"...Some critics blame me and say: 'Why are your children and everyone here beautiful?' I look at them in wonder and say: 'Aren't all people beautiful?' At any rate, I believe that all young people are beautiful. Youth is always beautiful if the boys and girls have been brought up well and if they live decently, work and enjoy life in a decent manner.

"I think that every Soviet teacher and every Soviet person must expect every normal Soviet citizen and child to behave normally, and only those who are physically or mentally disabled should be considered abnormal.

"That is what I expected from my pupils in my work, and I believe that this must become a rule of Soviet pedagogics: an inexorable clear, direct and explicit demand."

For eight years Makarenko headed the colony, carrying out on an unprecedentedly large-scale work-and-study rehabilitation programmes for waifs and juvenile delinquents.

The talented teacher tried to "project the best in the individual". He looked for the positive qualities in his pupils first of all. That is why they grew up to be morally healthy adults capable of mastering any profession.

The Maxim Gorky Children's Colony (named after the great proletarian writer who visited the colony in 1928), became well-known at home and abroad.

Makarenko had many followers in the Soviet Union. In the majority of colonies and communes the children were taught by experienced teachers and trained in various skills. They worked in industrial shops and on farms under the guidance of instructors, earning the money for their upkeep and learning to appreciate the practical results of their joint efforts.

What If a Teacher Has No Special Talent?

In 1928 Anton Makarenko became the director of the Dzerzhinsky Children's Work Commune located on the outskirts of Kharkov.

Makarenko was faced with the problem of providing highly professional teaching and training for every child in the country.

"Should the upbringing of all Soviet children depend upon a teacher's talent? No. Why should a child suffer if he has an untalented teacher?

"My experience as a teacher convinced me that the solution lay in mastery based on skill.

"...I have come to the following conclusion, a most important one for me. There is no such a thing as a problem child.

"I have come to another conclusion ... that the so-called reshaping and improving of a character

must not be an evolutionary, drawn-out process. ...It must take place as quickly as possible."

The explosion method.

"We used to round the waifs up at night from the express trains. Then seven or eight of our pupils would speak to them saying: 'Dear comrades, our commune desperately needs workers. We're building a new factory, and we've come here to ask you to help.'

"And the children would believe them.

"They were told that those who did not want to go to the commune could continue on their journey.

"At this point the method of surprise, which I call the method of explosion, began.

"As a rule, the children always agreed to help us.

"They would sleep overnight in ... a room (at the railway station – *Author*). At noon the next day the entire commune would arrive at the station with a banner and our fine big band. There were sixty trumpeters. The members of the commune had on smart uniforms with white collars, and monograms. When the group of barefoot waifs, wrapping their rags closer around themselves, would appear on the station square, the band would begin to play, greeting them with music, saluting them as our best friends.

"Then a column was formed with our YCL members leading the way. Next came the girls, then the group of waifs and another group of commune members bringing up the rear.

"The bystanders were so moved they wept, but we regarded this as a part of our routine and didn't get sentimental.

"On arriving at the commune, the children were taken to the bathhouse. They came out clean and fresh with their hair cut, and dressed in the same

uniforms with white collars as all the other children.

“Then their clothes were wheeled in in a cart, gasoline was poured over them and they were solemnly burnt.

“Two pupils on duty would then sweep the ashes into a pail.

“Many of my colleagues thought this a joke, but it made a tremendous impression on the children.

“I can only name two or three of these homeless children whom we picked up from the trains who did not live up to my expectations.

“This method of explosion is the cornerstone of my whole system.

“The collective was the essence of this system.”

“...A child has a passion for playing... Games should always be a part of life...

“We had a modern factory where we produced high-standard Leika cameras, yet work was considered fun.

“We teachers must also participate in this game.”

On Pedagogical Risk

“In the eight years that I headed the Dzerzhinsky Commune I only expelled about ten pupils, expelled them flatly and without any excuse. We said to them: ‘You can go whenever you want to, because you’re worthless. Your very existence insults and offends us. We’re telling you this to your face; you rate very low as a person.’ Certainly I worried about what might happen, but the inner need to do it and the deed were in keeping with my conscience. And what do you think? The expelled youths wrote to me several years later...

“I think we risk more by our passive acceptance

than by a direct, sincere and open struggle with some trends in the child's development."

Tomorrow's Happiness Is the Object of Our Work

Watching a child, Anton Makarenko was able not only to imagine his future, but to perceive how to develop his individuality and bring him happiness.

"When you look at a pupil you must be able to imagine more than you actually see. And this is as it should be. Just as a good hunter aims ahead of his moving target, a teacher must look ahead in his work; he must demand much of his pupil and respect him, although perhaps he does not yet deserve this respect.

"...Tomorrow's happiness stimulates human endeavour. It is one of the most important levers of pedagogics. First, this happiness must be organised and established as a reality.

"Second, the more simple forms of happiness must be consistently guided towards more complex and significant ones, from simple satisfaction to a profound sense of duty.

"A person who plans his actions in accordance with the near perspective is weak."

"To bring up an individual means to develop in him a sense of the future. The methodology of this work consists in working out new prospects, utilising existing ones and gradually adding more valuable ones.

"The immediate perspective. The near perspective. The far perspective."

The humanist Anton Makarenko lived to see his far perspective realised. His pupils grew up to be

workers, teachers, scientists, engineers, diplomats and musicians. They were able to enjoy a normal life and happiness.

On April 1, 1939, at the age of fifty, Makarenko died of heart failure in a suburban train but his works and his deeds live on, for they will continue to have great significance.

Children's Homes in the USSR

“There are few words in any language which evoke an image of suffering equal to the word ‘orphan’. The fate of the child who has lost his parents has always been a symbol of tragedy and helplessness,” said Kira Agafonova, Deputy Director of the Board of Education of the USSR Ministry of Education.

“The Soviet state has always done its best for orphans and has tried to provide them with a normal childhood, an education and a profession. During the first years of Soviet power this was an especially difficult task, as millions of children had been orphaned by the war. That is why the country’s educational bodies were given the task of setting up a network of hundreds of children’s homes.

“Children’s homes usually occupied the former mansions of the nobility and the rich, which had been confiscated by the Revolution, or estates that had belonged to former landlords. At the time, the state was very short of funds, food and consumer goods, yet the orphans were adequately fed, clothed and all attended school. In looking back on the work of the children’s homes of the period, we find that the orphans led normal lives that did not differ greatly from those of the children who had parents. Many doctors, teachers, out-

standing Soviet scientists and statesmen, all of whom are now middle-aged, grew up in children's homes."

"Can you tell me about the children who lost their parents in World War II?"

"World War II caused the Soviet Union to increase the number of its children's homes once again, for hundreds of thousands of children lost their parents. Even today parents are still searching for children lost in the war.

"Today the number of children's homes has decreased significantly, since many of the children have been adopted. I must say that educational bodies favour adoption as the best possible solution for the child. The state strictly guards the fact that the child is adopted, if the new parents so desire."

"What kind of children live in the children's home?"

"Most are orphans, or children whose parents are too ill to care for them. Children of widowed, unwed, or divorced mothers are also accepted if the mother is unable or does not wish to bring up her children. In this case she is not deprived of parental rights and can visit them, take them home for visits, or permanently if her situation improves. Such children can only be adopted with the mother's official consent. Naturally, this also concerns widowed fathers.

"Children's homes accept children from 3 to 16 years of age and care for them until they are 18 years old. Children younger than 3 years of age are sent to infant homes sponsored by public health bodies. Brothers and sisters are never separated."

"How are the child's legal rights protected?"

"When a child is placed in a children's home the local board of education becomes his legal guardian. It must see to it that the personal estate and

inheritance left by his parents are duly preserved. When the child comes of age he will receive them. Papers establishing the child's right to housing are preserved, as is information about his next of kin. He will need all this when he leaves the home.

"The personnel in a children's home tries to bind the children into a single family. The older children care for the younger ones, and every home has a self-governing body which is directed by a Pupils' Council."

"What about the adults who are associated with the children's homes?"

"The Board of Guardians, which includes representatives of the local governmental bodies, state and public organisations, trade unions, the management of the district's plants, factories, state and collective farms, is extremely important in helping to run a children's home. The Board co-ordinates the work of the sponsors and tries to make every meeting between the children and their sponsors one which will encourage close relations. These meetings result in lasting friendships, and often the children later go to work at the factory or on the collective farm which was their sponsor."

"What does the upkeep of one child in a children's home cost the state?"

"A total of 1,460 rubles annually. In addition, sponsoring organisations allocate funds from their budgets to buy books, musical instruments and sports equipment for the children.

"As a rule, children's homes are located in park areas and have a garden, playing grounds and sports facilities. Every home has comfortable dormitories, a dining room, study and play rooms, an auditorium, music hall, gym, library, doctor's office and quarantine.

"Secondary education has now been made com-

pulsory in the USSR. This naturally applies to those in children's homes as well, and they must attend the nearest secondary school. All questions of upbringing and education are jointly discussed by the teachers at the children's home and the school.

"On coming of age and leaving the children's home, the young people are provided with clothing and receive a lump sum of money as a grant. They can still return to the home for a temporary stay (during vacations, or when in between jobs). In this case they are again supported by the state.

"Depending on their wishes and abilities, the former pupils enter vocational schools (where they are provided with free housing, clothing and food), specialised secondary schools, or institutes and universities. They are given a free choice in this matter."

"What is being done to improve the children's homes?"

"The system of upbringing in children's homes is not rigid. Changes are made in accordance with recommendations provided by the latest developments in the fields of pedagogics, psychology and medicine.

"I would like to conclude by quoting children's writer Albert Likhanov, winner of the RSFSR State Prize and the YCL Prize and Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Second All-Union Week, "Creative Young People and Children's Homes". He said:

"The first Week took place a year ago. It was sponsored by the USSR Ministries of Culture and Education, writers', artists', cinematographers' and composers' unions, central committees of cultural and educational workers' trade unions, and the Young Communist League.

“‘Buses, planes and trains brought films and performers, smiles and songs, books and candy to the children’s homes. Close to one million books were collected throughout the country for the libraries of children’s homes.

“‘The children there need our friendship, they need warm relationships. They are looking to us for hope.’”

Society and government bodies must provide special care for orphans and children growing up apart from their parents.

The Ballad of a Kind Heart

This story was told to me by the late Yelena Kononenko, a former *Pravda* correspondent and bearer of the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Great Patriotic War, 1st Degree. Sergei Eizenstein, the outstanding Soviet film director, said she was a great friend of children. She died recently, and I still find this difficult to believe. Whenever I attend a plenum of the Soviet Women’s Committee (Yelena Kononenko was its member), I still wait for her to rise from her seat, wave and suggest we have a cup of coffee. I will always remember her and will always cherish her book *Together With You*, which she gave me.

During and after World War II Yelena Kononenko devoted all her time to writing about children who were the victims of war.

This is what she wrote about the orphans of World War II and about those who could tell them: “You are not an orphan.”

“I met Shaakhmed, a blacksmith from Tashkent, and his wife Bakhri one Sunday morning.

“The small shady yard of their house was lined

with old mulberry, almond, apple, peach, and cherry trees. It was pleasant to sit in the large, vine-covered arbour, where the family had tea.

“Shaakhmed Shamakhmudov was sixty-five years old then but looked younger. He was a sturdy, strong man with laughing black eyes that were expressive and kind. One had only to look into those eyes and see his kind smile to understand how this man had become the father of fourteen orphans, who were not only Uzbek like himself, but Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Moldavian, Tatar and Kazakh as well.

“His wife Bakhri was fifty-two. She was still quite attractive: olive-skinned, chiselled features, black eyes, long lashes and arched brows.

“Shaakhmed, why are your children of so many different nationalities?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t choose them according to nationality. Maybe it’s because children of all nationalities are the victims of war. They were equally dear to me when I took them from the children’s home. I thought that if a boy is an orphan, he is my son. All people are one people. Do you understand what I mean?””

“Bakhri said something to the children softly. Suddenly everyone started to move at once. The children brought out small tea bowls, melons, walnuts, round flat cakes and sugar. Soon we were all seated on the soft bright rugs around Shaakhmed and Bakhri.

“This is their story:

“In 1941 he and his wife lived in a small, old house on Djararyk Street outside of Tashkent. Today, in the same shady yard, they have a new home, which the state helped them to build.

“...Shaakhmed was a progressive man for his time: as far back as 1919 he had persuaded his

young wife Bakhri to take off her suffocating black *paranja*.

"Shaakhmed had never worked as hard as he did during the Great Patriotic War, but he still felt he hadn't done enough. What else could he do to help his country in such trying times?

"One day he learned that two trains carrying orphans, all victims of the war, had arrived in Tashkent. The city's children's homes were overcrowded, and people were being allowed to take a child into their families. Shaakhmed and Bakhri had no children.

"Did you hear the news, Bakhri?"

"Go there, Shaakhmed."

"He went out and asked a militiaman where the youngest children were that had been brought to Tashkent. The militiaman directed him to Komsomolskoye Lake. The orphans were being housed in a building on its bank. The children stood huddled together, their faces pale, their eyes frightened.

The blacksmith's heart was filled with compassion.

"He said: 'I'll take the smallest one.'

"Shaakhmed brought home five-month-old Nigmat. That was the name Bakhri gave him, for no one knew his name or nationality.

"....After their new son had fallen asleep, Shaakhmed and Bakhri sat beside him all night long, speaking in whispers so as not to awaken him.

"Three days later the blacksmith and his wife adopted another boy. They named him Rakhmat. He had been registered in the children's home as Adik (a nickname), last name unknown. The family still calls him Adik. This is how he came to be a part of the family:

"One night Bakhri woke up and saw her husband sitting at the window.

“Why aren’t you asleep, Shakhmed?”

“I can’t sleep. I keep seeing those children. There are so many of them. Let’s take another one, Bakhri. We’ll find room for him.”

“So he went to the lake again and returned with two-year-old Adik.

“Shaakhmed said he chose Adik because he seemed to be the most unhappy of all. He just sat in a corner and shivered, and he was as light as a feather.

“...One day in 1942, Bakhri said:

“You know, Shaakhmed, I’m managing perfectly with the two of them. What if you take another boy, one who’s a little older? He can play with Adik, and we’ll have three sons?”

“All right,” her husband said, and went to the children’s home again. This time he chose four-year-old Sanya, who was Ukrainian. When Shaakhmed and Sanya were preparing to leave the home, a thin, long-faced boy of about five ran up to them and whispered:

“Where are you going? I want to go with you!”

“The boy’s name was Fedya Kulchakovsky. The teacher led the crying boy away.

“When Shaakhmed brought Sanya home, Bakhri bathed him, dressed him in new clothes and then sat him on her lap and stroked his head.

“Smile, my son,” she said.

“But the boy sat there without moving. His large green eyes stared straight ahead. Bakhri gave him some nuts. He clutched them and sat there silently. He remained that way until the evening, the nuts still clutched in his hand.

“I think he needs a playmate, a boy his own age,” Shaakhmed said. He was thinking of the boy who had cried because Shaakhmed had not taken him, too.

“‘Bring him home,’ Bakhri sighed. ‘We’ll have four sons.’

“So the blacksmith went for Fedya.

“As Shaakhmed and Fedya were leaving, six-year-old Misha Yarulin ran after them. The blacksmith took him along, too.

“‘The boys were friends. Why separate friends? The more, the merrier,’ he said.

“‘You should have seen their reunion! Sanya, Fedya and Misha ran laughing to each other. During those first weeks they never parted, as if they were afraid that someone would separate them.’

“‘Don’t be afraid, you’ll live together now. Understand?’ said Bakhri.

“But they did not yet understand Uzbek. Bakhri embraced the three of them. Then Shaakhmed picked them up together. This they understood. Their eyes became less anxious and their voices louder. But at night they still had nightmares, especially Fedya, who was a nervous child.

“‘Mama! Mama!’ he shouted. ‘It’s burning!’

“‘I’m here, my son,’ Bakhri whispered in Uzbek.

“Then the boy quieted down at the gentle touch of her hand on his forehead.

“The boys were speaking Uzbek in no time. Bakhri gave them their Uzbek names: Eldash, Yuldash, and Khamidilya.

“Shaakhmed’s house was now full of noise. When he came home from work, the boys would shout. ‘Ada! Ada!’ (Father! Father!).

“‘Our house is not empty any more, Bakhri. Do you realise how dull and quiet it used to be? Do the children tire you very much?’

“‘Every mother gets tired at times.’

“Bakhri never complained.”

A year later, in 1943, another trainload of orphans was brought to Tashkent. Shaakhmed and

Bakhri decided to adopt another child.

“Shaakhmed went to Children’s Home No. 18. The teacher led out three children from which he could choose. They were four-year-old Karavoi, an Uzbek boy, five-year-old Vova, a Russian boy, and five-year-old Olya, a Moldavian girl. The blacksmith knelt down and winked at the children. Karavoy ran to him immediately. Vova stood very still and gazed at Shaakhmed sadly and timidly.

“‘Come here, sad eyes,’ he called.

“‘And then I said to myself that if I took the one sitting on my right knee, the one sitting on my left knee would be hurt. If I took the one sitting on my left knee, the one sitting on my right knee would feel hurt. So I decided to adopt them both. But the little girl was so sweet, that I brought her home too. I told Bakhri that I had not been able to choose among them.’

“‘You’re a wonderful man, Shaakhmed.’

“‘Wonderful? he raised his eyebrows. ‘Don’t say that. Their fathers sacrificed their lives for us.’

“After *Pravda* published the decision of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet to award the couple the Badges of Honour for having adopted fourteen children during the war, they began to receive letters from all over the country.

“Shaakhmed and Bakhri did not take an active part in the fighting. And they weren’t professional teachers or doctors. But they saved the lives of 14 children who were victims of the war.

“After the war ended, Raya Maltseva’s mother, who had been wounded at the front, learned of her daughter’s whereabouts and came for her. But Bakhri and Shaakhmed raised all the other children and gave them an education. They are all grown now with children and grandchildren of their own.”

In 1982 a monument was unveiled on the Peo-

ple's Friendship Square in Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan. The occasion was the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is a sculpture of Shaakhmed and Bakhri surrounded by their children: Ukrainian, Kazakh, Jewish, Moldavian, Russian and Uzbek.

"If a boy is an orphan, he is my son. All people are one people." This is what their father, Shaakhmed, said.

"Soviet Uzbekistan cared for close to 100,000 orphans during World War II. Almost 200,000 war orphans were adopted in the Russian Federation. Alexandra Derevskaya, who lived in the town of Romny in the Ukraine, brought up 48 children of many nationalities.

"This, too, is the Soviet way of protecting children."

A mother is the most important person in her child's life. What kind of person her child grows up to be depends greatly on her personality, level of education and status in the family and in society.

That is why this chapter is devoted to women. Today they comprise the majority of the world population and there are 600 million women who belong to the work force. However, the "barometer of democracy" (the position of women) indicates that women are still discriminated against.

There are few women who serve as deputies in parliament, but many who belong to the army of the unemployed.

Though women comprise one-third of the officially registered work force, they earn only one-tenth of its wages. Thus, for every dollar earned by a man in the USA, a woman is paid 59 cents.

Women also constitute a majority (500 million) of the world's illiterates. Many 20th-century women remain the world's "second-rate citizens".

Visitors from abroad often tell us about the discrimination of women in their countries and want to know about the situation in the USSR.

A Soviet woman is an educated person (women constitute 59 per cent of all people with a higher or secondary specialised education). Any career is open to her, she need only have the necessary abili-



Motherhood



Maxim Gorky and Anton Makarenko at an orphanage, later named after Gorky, 1928

Lessons in a women's club to stamp out illiteracy among Uzbeks, 1930





V. I. Lenin with children on Red Square,
November 7, 1919



Monument on Friendship of the Peoples Square in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, dedicated to blacksmith Shaakhmed Shamakhmudov and his wife Bakhri who during the Second World War adopted fourteen orphans of different nationalities



A nursery school teacher with her charges





A lesson in drawing at a kindergarten

A gym session at a kindergarten







Galina Smagina, the skipper of a Perm air service TU-134 and five-time world record holder in aerial sport, considers her biggest accomplishment the birth of a son

Young traffic managers





Buglers

A meeting of the International Friendship Club Board



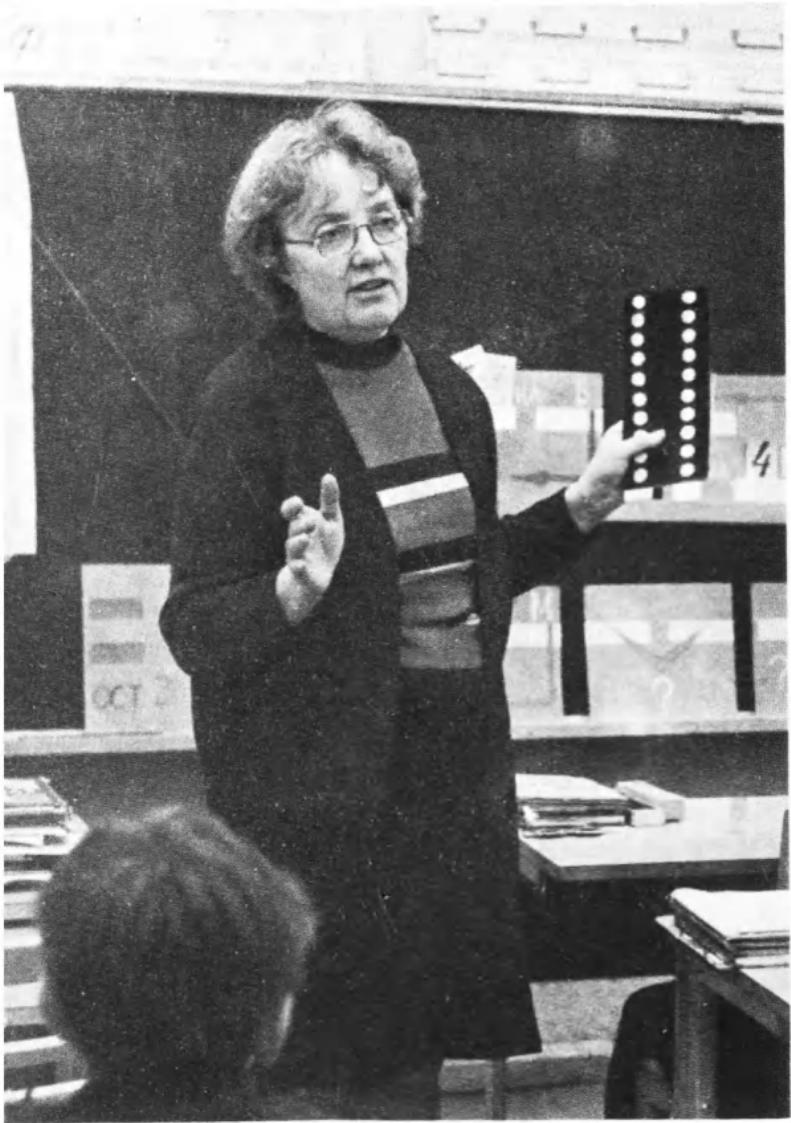


At Young Pioneers' Palace

At the Olenok Young Pioneers' Camp

In School No 587 in Moscow. The lesson is being conducted by Sofiya Lysenkova, Honoured Teacher of the RSFSR and author of the book *When Studying Is a Joy*

Getting ready for school



ties and a creative approach to her work. At present, half a million women are heads of construction projects, shop superintendents, directors of industrial plants and heads of collective farms. Women receive equal pay for equal work; their professional and human rights are never infringed upon. Women are well represented in all government bodies: 487 women were elected to the last convocation of the Soviet parliament (1979), comprising one-third of all its deputies. There are more women in the USSR Supreme Soviet than in all the parliaments of the capitalist countries taken together.

The life of the Soviet woman refutes all the slander and falsifications of the socialist system, Soviet society, and Soviet women and mothers that are continuously being published abroad. A cheap, colourfully designed magazine called *Woman and Russia* has appeared on the market in many countries. It is devoted to the allegedly appalling and unbearable status of women in the USSR. The reader is given to believe that in the USSR equal rights for men and women exist only on paper, while in reality a woman has a very narrow choice of jobs, is paid less than man for equal work, is all but barred from managing the affairs of the state, and mothers and children have no guaranteed rights. These are the lies of anti-Sovietism, which attempt to conceal the truth about the Soviet Union.

Here I will quote from a letter sent by Isabella Cont (France) to *Soviet Woman* magazine, published in the USSR:

"I am studying social sciences in Bordeaux. I choose the status of women in the USSR as the theme of my research. Last summer I spent three weeks in your country. On every page of French women's magazines we see beauty tips, recipes, etc.

A woman is almost exclusively represented as a sex symbol or as a mother and very rarely as an individual who thinks, works and participates in her country's political and economic life."

When I read this letter, I decided to write about the Soviet women I knew who combined beauty, motherhood and a job, while helping to run the country.

Her Work in the Skies

Galina Smagina, a TU-134 airliner pilot from Perm and bearer of the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, has set five world records in flying. When I first met her I asked,

"If you look back on your life, what do you consider to be your greatest achievement?"

"My son, Denis."

"Tell me about him."

"He has blue eyes and fair hair, and resembles his grandfather. He'll soon be going to school. His father is a pilot, too. When people ask him 'Will you be a pilot, when you grow up?' he says: 'I don't know. I have to think about it.'

"Doesn't your work deprive your son of a mother? After all, you're in the sky, and he's on earth."

"My vocation is flying. And what could be more natural than choosing what you like best for your career? Yes, I am in the sky. But when I participated in the Sofia-Vladivostok non-stop flight (13:01 hrs) as a member of the Aeroflot team (which included women pilots from many cities of the Soviet Union), I felt that my son was with me. He knew that his mother was piloting a plane, and he was waiting for me.

“He recently asked me whether I am ever afraid. I told him about the time I nearly crashed. It was a passenger flight to Central Asia. We were flying over the mountains at an altitude of 6,000 metres. Suddenly one of the motors stopped. I wasn’t afraid. I had to make a split-second decision. I was the pilot, and everyone’s life depended on me. In short, I came down for an emergency landing in Kurgan Tyube. The passengers filed out. No one suspecting anything. Our crew watched them: a child, a smiling old man, chatting women. ‘That’s when I really felt frightened,’ I said to Denis. But when I’m in the sky and everything depends on me, I have no right to be afraid. Denis’ mother is a symbol of courage to him. But, as the poet Mikhalkov wrote so many years ago: ‘Mother’s a pilot – what’s so special about that?’”

“What are your interests apart from your work?”

“I like classical music: Beethoven most of all and Tchaikovsky, Mozart and Prokofiev; and the Russian poets Tiutchev and Anna Akhmatova.”

“What qualities in people do you value most and which do you like least?”

“I hate pettiness, a life lived only for oneself, a consumer philosophy. I most value kindness; one must at times be harsh, but always just. And honesty. Friendship is also of great importance to me as are understanding in friendship and understanding in love.”

“What part do you take in bringing up your son when you are home?”

“I see him every other day and devote all my free time to him: we go to exhibitions, museums and visiting. We also go to the park: there are many rides and I try to develop my son’s courage on the various rotating planes and wheels. So far we un-

derstand each other perfectly. His grandfather is a very kind person, and tries to avoid all conflicts, and his grandmother lets him get away with too much. So it is up to me to teach him discipline."

"I don't think I would give him so much of my time if I didn't fly. You can give a child a lot in an hour, and nothing in a day. The quality of the relationship is what counts most in upbringing. When I teach him something, I regard him critically, as I do myself."

"What is your opinion of yourself?"

"I'm a rational person, perhaps even too rational. This helps me in my work, for I can do a lot in a short time and not become distracted. I don't think I'm emotional enough. Human relationships cannot be fit into patterns. I want Denis to be an emotional person."

"You were elected delegate to the 26th Congress of the CPSU which outlined the country's economic and social development for the 1980s. What are your professional plans for the future?"

"The same as for the eleventh five-year plan period: new machines, new flights, new crews. In a word, there is a lot of interesting work ahead."

A Woman Accepts the Gold Mercury International Award

Tamara Filippova is a staff artist at the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in Leningrad. Porcelain painted with her thin brush can be found not only in homes in the Soviet Union, but in 26 other countries. My first question to her was about her children:

“How old are your son and daughter? What are their names?”

“Andrei is thirteen and he’s in the 6th grade. Irina is eight. She’s in the first grade.”

“You’re a fine painter. What about your children? Do they like to draw?”

“They’ve received instruction from their nursery school and kindergarten teachers and myself. They often visit me at the shop where I work and look at the decorative plates, vases, and tea and coffee sets for which I do the designs. They try to paint and watch me teach my apprentices.”

“Tell me about your apprentices?”

“During the past few years I have taught six girls how to paint porcelain. I devote a year to each of them.”

“Can you describe your methods?”

“I teach them both from the professional and the human point of view. They begin by painting damp crocks. I teach them to evaluate the colours they use and to feel the design: the curve of a blade of grass, the shape of a flower, the movement of a bird in flight, or of a swimming fish. But I especially try to develop their individuality. I think I have succeeded, for each of the six has her own distinctive style.

“Though they’re much younger than I, our relationship is that of equals, of girl friends. I’ve met their parents and know about their problems. I always try to help them if they have difficulties. They sit around me in a circle when we work and others say: ‘She’s still young, but she’s like a hen with chicks.’ My children have often seen me with my girls. I think this is even more important than a mere drawing lesson.”

“For what were you awarded the Order of Glory of Labour?”

“For the systematic overfulfilment of work quotas and the improvement of the quality of goods.”

“The Lomonosov Porcelain Factory recently received the Gold Mercury International Award. Will you tell me about it?”

“I think this is a special acknowledgement of our factory’s contribution to international co-operation. I was proud to hold the golden, winged Mercury. I thought of it as a symbol of friendship.”

“What do your children want to be when they grow up?”

“Andrei wants to be a sailor. Irina is too young to know yet.

“My husband, who’s a welder at the factory, and I take the children to the Hermitage regularly. I tell them about the great masterpieces that we see. We especially love Rembrandt Hall. We often leave the city and go to Pavlovsk or Pushkin. Sometimes we just drive to some beautiful spot in the countryside. Andrei gets out his pad and starts sketching. He must take after me.”

What Does Kamshat Mean?

She swiftly opened the door of her room at the Moskva Hotel and offered me an armchair with oriental calm. This woman with the grave face and the deputy’s badge on her jacket is a shepherd’s daughter. Before I had only seen a photograph of Kamshat Donenbayeva. She was standing in a field beside a tractor, up to her chest in yellow wheat. Here she was now, a delegate to the 26th Congress of the CPSU. She had just returned from a session in the Kremlin where she was elected a member of the CPSU Central Auditing Commission.

Kamshat Donenbayeva, a tractor-driver and Hero of Socialist Labour, raises wheat on the Khar-kovsky State Farm in Kazakhstan. A sheaf of grain, a ladle with molten metal and a spaceship are the symbols of this large republic in the south of the USSR.

"I first started harvesting mowed wheat, but later began growing it myself. This has become my life's work," she said.

Over twenty years ago Kamshat, who was then employed at a grain elevator, married Temirbek Donenbayev. If you visit their spacious, well-furnished home adorned with many colourful native Kazakh carpets, Kamshat will introduce her four children to you.

Eighteen-year-old Gulzhane (which means "flower of the soul"), is a student at an agricultural institute in Kustanai and only comes home for vacation. Her sister, seventeen-year-old Gulshag ("flower of peace") is a senior at secondary school. Her two interests are chemistry and basketball. The two sons, Syrym ("hero") and Askar, the youngest ("unattainable mountain peak"), are both at school. Askar is a forward on the school's hockey team.

I wrote about the children exactly as their mother told me about them, sometimes with a smile and sometimes very gravely. Then she added: "The children are my greatest happiness and concern."

"What does your own name, Kamshat, mean?"

"Born for happiness."

Gulzhane is enrolled in the same institute and studies in the same department of agronomy as her father. However, she attends day classes, while her father takes correspondence courses. Temirbek originally graduated from an agricultural technical school. He is now completing his higher education.

Kamshat told me that her husband, the son of a shepherd and once a shepherd himself, used to be a tractor-driver, but now works as an engineer on the state farm. "He wants to know more today than he knew yesterday. That's what he's like."

This family is typical of present-day Kazakhstan, where only two out of a hundred people were literate before the Revolution. Today, of every 1,000 persons employed in the national economy, 807 have a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education.

"How did you learn to be a tractor-driver?" I asked Kamshat.

"My husband suggested that I study at a driving school. I completed it when I was 23, passing all but the last exam, for my daughter was born that day. Some time later I started working. Unlike today, it was odd for a Kazakh woman to be a tractor-driver then. It's a very ordinary job, but I received the highest award, the Order of Lenin, for doing it. My first Order was for harvesting bumper crops.

"We have a 'feel' for the soil. Our climate is very changeable so there are no set times for ploughing and sowing. When I touch the soil and pick up a clump of earth, I can tell whether the soil is ready yet.

"But this 'feel' I had was not enough. It had to be backed by knowledge. That is why, like my husband, I enrolled as a correspondence student to study agronomy. I graduated from the agricultural technical school not long ago and am now a tractor-driver and an agronomist. The two go hand in hand.

"How did you manage to combine your household chores, a job and your studies?"

"It would have been impossible without the nursery school and kindergarten. I knew that my

children were being properly cared for. They were also taught music and arts and crafts. Now they are older and help out at home.

"When I come home after a hard day, dinner is on the table. Everyone helps out and no one is lazy. The children are good students; they don't want to disappoint me. My children and I are friends. I want them to be kind and truthful, and able to accept criticism. But if they misbehave, I am the stricter parent, not their father."

"You're the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Every day people come to you, as a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, with their requests and suggestions. What actual help do you give them?"

"I speak to the person, then form my opinion on the matter. There's a lot I can do, for I work for the people. For instance, I was asked to bring up the matter concerning the construction of the Kustanai-Karasu Highway and was able to do so.

"Another time I was asked to help with an allotment of funds for a park on the main grounds of the Kharkovsky State Farm. Fifteen thousand rubles were allocated, and hundreds of thousands of trees were planted there. Once my fellow-villagers requested that I ask the Government of Kazakhstan to allocate funds for a children's music school in Uritsky Village. This was a task I undertook with pleasure, as I am a music-lover. When I recently visited the school and listened to a little girl playing on a fine grand piano, I said to myself that I, a woman and a tractor-driver, had done my share to make this possible."

These are the Soviet mothers of the 1980s. They are equal members of society. According to numerous surveys, 70 per cent of all Soviet women

would not leave their jobs if their salaries were added to their husband's salaries. A Soviet woman regards her job as a means of establishing her status as an individual and professional. A new type of women has emerged in the USSR: educated, self-confident and with a highly-developed sense of duty towards society.

Such women are greatly respected at home and can naturally offer much to their children and family. Their role in the upbringing of children is extremely significant and is in accord with Principle 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child: "The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality needs love and understanding."

Now I would like to give a detailed answer to Nora Rodd from Canada who asked: "I'd like to know what your country offers its children?"

In other words, how is the principle "A HAPPY CHILDHOOD FOR EVERY CHILD", reflected in the Programme of the CPSU, is being implemented. Following is a review of three spheres that pertain to the child: health care, upbringing and education.

6

The Healthy Child

Let us discuss the urgent problem of health care for mothers and children. Principle 4 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child stresses that: "The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services."

The following data indicate how far this Principle is from being fulfilled:

10 million children die of hunger annually;

200 million children suffer from hunger and disease as a result of permanent malnutrition;

Only every 20th child in the world receives medical care;

90 per cent of all children have never been inoculated;

In South Africa there is one doctor for every 44,000 Africans, and one doctor for every 400 white citizens. Fifty per cent of all Black children in Africa die before they reach the age of five.

A Decree Signed by Lenin

The young Soviet Republic inherited a pressing problem from tsarist Russia: the infant mortality

rate was 269 deaths for every 1,000 infants born; moreover, 43 per cent of all children died before they reached the age of five. There were only 9 health care centres for women and children in a country with a population of many millions and only 5.2 per cent of all women received medical attention in childbirth. Tsarist Russia had one of the lowest standards of health in Europe.

“Two million infant lives, lives which had just begun to glimmer on earth, were extinguished annually in Russia as a result of the ignorance and irresponsibility of the oppressed population and of the stagnation and indifference of the class state. Each year two million grieving mothers shed their tears on Russian soil,... on the early graves of the senseless victims of the ugly state system.” This is an excerpt from a Decree of the Soviet Government (January 1918).

Six decades later Prof. Bertil Lindquist, President of the Union of National European Pediatric Societies and Associations, said at the International Conference on the Healthy Child that the USSR provides a striking example of a society’s concern for its young citizens and that the successes of the Soviet public health system, the stress on disease prevention and the country’s experience in protecting the health of women and children continue to arouse great interest in the medical communities of many countries. He added that today we can speak of the advantages of the Soviet system of disease prevention for the future generation.

Whereas tsarist Russia had one of the lowest standards of health in the world, with an average life expectancy of 32 years, the Soviet Union today has virtually eliminated many diseases and the average life expectancy is now 70 years.

How could such a striking change take place in such a short period of time?

Here are some facts. In July 1918 Lenin signed a decree on the establishment of a People's Commissariat for Health, the first such state public health body in the world.

Urgent measures were taken to stamp out tuberculosis, trachoma and other social diseases. At the same time, a network of medical and research establishments and a system for health education were set up. A great number of medical personnel was being trained. Such broad measures could only be carried out on the basis of a united policy established by the People's Commissariat of Health.

Concern for the people's health is an integral part of the state policy of the USSR. It is based on the three following principles: the health of adults, of parents; the health of their children; and the health of future generations, for healthy children today mean healthy generations in the future.

The Constitution of the USSR has laid the foundation for this. Article 42 reads:

“Citizens of the USSR have the right to health protection.

“This right is ensured by free, qualified medical care provided by state health institutions; by extension of the network of therapeutic and health-building institutions; by the development and improvement of safety and hygiene in industry, by carrying out broad prophylactic measures; by measures to improve the environment; by special care for the health of the rising generation, including prohibition of child labour, excluding the work done by children as part of the school curriculum; and by developing research to prevent and reduce the incidence of disease and ensure citizens a long and active life.”

This is what the law states. But what does one find in reality?

A Pediatrician for Millions

The following conversation took place in the USSR Ministry of Health. Dr. Inga Grebesheva, a researcher in pediatrics, started out as a pediatrician in a district children's polyclinic. Today this 45-year-old woman can rightly be called a pediatrician for millions, as she is the head of the Ministry of Public Health's Board of Medical and Preventative Aid to Children and Mothers.

As I began my interview of Dr. Grebesheva I stated: "We are both mothers and grandmothers. Your three-year-old grandson Alyosha is a year older than my grandson Artyom, so child rearing is of personal interest to us both. My first question is: How would you describe a healthy child?"

"This is a cardinal question from a medical, philosophical, legal and social point of view. Children are a barometer of society, of its health or illness. The question of a child's health is inseparable from the conditions of the society in which he lives.

"Healthy children are our goal. A child's health depends greatly on his mother's health. This is a very important point. His health also depends on his living conditions, the food he eats, and on the psychological climate, both in the family and outside the family.

"A physically and mentally healthy child lives in an atmosphere of social comfort. He is well-fed and spirited, and feels that he is loved, that nothing threatens him, that there is nothing to be afraid of. He is surrounded by his mother and family and this makes him feel secure and happy.

“‘Health’ means being able to resist physical and mental strain, within the child’s limits, naturally. And, finally, all healthy children are born with creative abilities which must be discovered and developed. How encouraging this sounds. If only it were true of all the children of the world.

“But, unfortunately, this is an unattainable ideal for many children. This is why a state which strives to ensure every child’s health is humane, whereas one, no matter how prosperous in other areas, that does not pay adequate attention to its children, is in danger of becoming degenerate.”

“What can you say about the country’s system of mother and child care?”

“It was the first such state system in the world and includes state aid to every mother and child, supervision of all legislation that protects their interests, and, of course, free and available medical care.”

“How does the Soviet Union protect its children’s health?”

“Health protection includes many aspects. The problem of the child’s health arises long before he is born. There are genetic consultation centres where people with genetic diseases are examined to determine whether they should have children.

“There are now 60 such consultation centres in the country, and the number is growing.

“If the risk of giving birth to a malformed child is low or if it is possible to cure the disease, special recommendations are given to the couple applying for help to reduce negative hereditary factors. Moreover, a child born to such parents will be placed under constant medical supervision.

“Now, to go on the subject of expectant mothers. Every expectant mother, starting from the first weeks of pregnancy, is followed during the course

of her pregnancy by a women's consultation centre, the one nearest to her place of residence. There are over 10,000 such consultation centres in the USSR. A woman has an average of at least 10 regular check-ups during her pregnancy.

"All pregnant women are prepared for childbirth. They receive training in psychotherapy and are taught special exercises."

"The future mother is under constant medical care, but she must also be assured job security and safe working conditions, is this not correct?"

"Yes, of course. Especially since every second person occupied in the national economy is a woman. It is against the law to refuse to hire, to fire or to cut the pay of a pregnant woman or nursing mother. If her work is too strenuous, a pregnant woman or nursing mother must be transferred to an easier job, or her work quota must be lowered, with no cut in pay. Thus, her earnings during this period are actually higher than those of men doing the same job.

"Another important measure concerns maternity leave. Regardless of whether a woman is a member of a trade union or how long she has been employed, she is given 56 days of paid leave before the birth of her child and 56 days of paid leave after the child is born. She receives additional paid leave if she has a multiple birth.

"In short, everything is done to ensure the future mother's health, for the child's life and health depend on the mother. Health protection for mothers is one of the major means of preventing children's diseases and infant mortality."

"What can you say about childbirth and the role of obstetrical care?"

"Most children in the Soviet Union are born in maternity homes, clinics or hospitals. I would like

to cite two figures: in 1940, the number of hospital beds available for pregnant women and women in labour was 147,000, while in 1982 this number was over 230,000.

“The role of the obstetrician has also changed. He (she) now has access to computers and many other modern scientific innovations.

“There are no organisational barriers between obstetrical and gynaecological services, and this is very important. From the very first weeks of pregnancy a woman is cared for at a woman’s consultation centre that works in conjunction with the obstetrician. This considerably decreases the number of complications during childbirth and the threat of infant mortality.

“Soviet specialists, followers of Academician Persianinov, have devised an electro-analgesic method for relieving the pains of childbirth.

“These are the ways we protect the health of the mother and her infant.”

“You will probably agree that it is difficult to introduce such new methods into all obstetrical and gynaecological centres.”

“Of course, but we are trying to overcome this problem by organising centralised laboratories and consultation centres (any doctor who has doubts about a diagnosis can send his patient there) and by enlarging women’s consultation centres and merging them with polyclinics.

“I often visit the All-Union Research Centre for Mother and Child Health Protection. It was opened in Moscow during the International Year of the Child (1979). Hundreds of women receive care in its hospital, and close to 1,000 women are treated at its polyclinic. It is one of the country’s largest research centres.

“The centre coordinates research conducted on a

national scale and works out new methods which are then introduced in all the country's medical establishments."

"What women are considered to be in the 'high risk' group?"

"If there are complications with the pregnancy, the woman is placed under special observation. All women in this group are sent to specialised maternity homes (those who suffer from heart and kidney disease, diabetis or have a negative Rh factor). Infant mortality in children born to women with cardio-vascular diseases is now almost 5 times less and to women with diabetis 4 times less than before such specialised care was given."

"What can you say about the problem of abortion?"

"Although birth-rates are far from satisfactory, the state considers it inadmissible to dictate family planning. A few days ago I spoke to Dr. Yuri Bloshansky, Chief Obstetrician-Gynaecologist of Moscow. This is what he said: 'A woman is a man's equal as a professional and as a human being. Therefore, she is free to plan her life, to decide how many children to have, or whether to have children at all. I am convinced that a woman should be able to determine the number of children she wants to raise.'

"A law making abortions legal has saved many women from resorting to illegal abortions for which many women have paid with their health and sometimes with their lives as well. The birth-rate does not depend on whether abortion is legal or illegal."

"Abortion, as any other medical service, is free of charge. If a pregnancy will endanger a woman's health and her doctor recommends an abortion, she will receive a fully-paid sick leave. Contraceptives are cheap in the USSR."

"At the same time, the state is interested in increasing the birth-rate and encourages motherhood in every possible way, both morally and materially. In our country motherhood is considered a social function."

"You have many years of experience as a district pediatrician. What are the problems in this sphere?"

"A pediatrician in a children's polyclinic becomes acquainted with the new mother and her infant on their return from the maternity home. From then on he becomes the child's family doctor caring for him until the age of 14.

"There are over 13,000 children's out-patient clinics in the USSR. Their chief aim is to help bring up healthy and well-developed children. There are a number of large polyclinics that can receive from 500 to 800 patients in a single shift. They have gymnasiums, swimming pools and modern physical therapy equipment.

"The district pediatrician, the central figure in the pediatric medical service, watches over the physical development of the new-born and provides an early diagnosis and timely treatment of disease.

"A major part of a polyclinic's work is devoted to conducting check-ups of all the children in a given district. They are examined by a surgeon, neurologist, oculist, otolaringologist and orthopedist. These check-ups are carried out on a regular basis and are most effective in early diagnosis of disease.

"All treatment, analyses, and consultations are free of charge.

"There are 100,000 pediatricians in the USSR today. Medical care for children is divided into three areas: polyclinics, hospitals and sanatoriums."

“Is child mortality dropping in the USSR?”

“It certainly is. It has fallen an average of 12.2 per cent throughout the country. This is accurate data, for the Soviet Union has a single state system for registering every birth and every infant death.”

“What was the situation in the past?”

“After the establishment of Soviet power, when child care was first introduced, our country had one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. Every fourth child born (and every third and second child in remote areas) died before reaching the age of one year. Ten years later, in 1927, the child mortality rate had decreased 1.5 times and continued to decrease steadily, until the outbreak of World War II.

“Not until the post-war period did it become possible to sharply reduce child death statistics. By 1950 the death rate decreased 4-fold, and by 1960 it decreased 8-fold, to coincide with the figures of the economically developed countries. Such a rapid decrease in child mortality is unprecedented.

“This produced the following statistical data: the physical development of children of all age groups and in all regions of the USSR has improved considerably. Soviet children are no longer threatened by such diseases as diphtheria and polio, both of which were still widespread 20 years ago. The number of cases of the grippe, scarlet fever and whooping cough has also declined.

“This is the result of work done by the country’s 26 research institutes in the fields of pediatrics, mother and child health protection, obstetrics and gynaecology, and of the 346 pediatric departments in the country’s medical schools and doctors’ advanced training institutes.”

“What are the prospects for the future?”

"A long-term (to 1990) state research programme entitled 'Scientific Foundations of Mother and Child Care' has been worked out. It marks a new qualitative stage in the development of Soviet pediatrics. Its range of activity is very broad: increasing the efficiency of children's medical establishments and specialised services; seeking better methods of preventing, diagnosing and treating children's diseases. Our goal is to provide for the balanced development of all our children, not only to protect them from disease.

"In August 1982 the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers passed a resolution On Additional Measures for Improving the Health Protection of the Population. The Party and government consider all work directed towards improving health care one of the most important social tasks put forth by the 26th Congress of the CPSU. Additional measures in this sphere have been planned up to 1990, to name but a few: improving disease prevention measures; improving the health of the population; and extending the active period of life of the Soviet people.

"Special attention is being paid to mothers and children. I will only mention the major problems. The resolution calls for improving the quality of regular check-ups for women and children; for developing and improving the work of genetic consultations; and for improving medical care in the pre-school establishments. New sports facilities and grounds must be set up at schools and pre-school establishments; the network of summer camps to which city pre-school establishments move for the summer, children's homes and Young Pioneer summer camps must be extended.

"This nation-wide programme will be put into practice by the governments of the country's 15

Republics. Various specialists, including paediatricians, will be involved in this project.

"Although the Western press alleges that there has been no qualitative improvements in the system of mother and child health protection in the USSR, I would like to stress that qualitative improvements in the system of medical care were the prevailing trend in the development of the Soviet health protection programmes in recent years.

"In conclusion I would like to say that the health of the population as a whole is one of the best social indicators. However, the right to health protection can only be considered a guaranteed right when every citizen, no matter where he lives and regardless of national origin or social background, has access to adequate medical service.

"This problem has been solved in the USSR."

A Shield Protecting Motherhood

In the late 1970s the USSR Council of Ministers and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) adopted a resolution On Additional Measures for Improving Women's Working Conditions, which stated that beginning with January 1, 1980, women employed in strenuous or dangerous jobs were to be transferred to others. The State Committee of the USSR for Labour and Social Affairs and the Presidium of the AUCCTU, in agreement with the USSR Ministry of Public Health, issued a list of jobs that were considered too strenuous or dangerous for women, and which made it illegal to employ women in these jobs.

The West European press (in particular, the press

of the Scandinavian countries), presented this new proof of the state's concern for the health of the country's women as a discriminatory measure directed against the principle of equality in work.

For this reason, I went to Number 1 Kuibyshev Street, to meet Maria Kravchenko, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of the USSR for Labour and Social Affairs, and Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee.

In one of our previous conversations she had told me that she was interested in the health, capacity to work and optimism of the Soviet woman.

In this interview I asked Maria Kravchenko to answer several questions about the new measures for improving working conditions for women that have been carried out in the Soviet Union.

"Do you think there is a contradiction between the new list of jobs and Article 35 of the Constitution which states that women and men in the USSR have equal rights? In other words, can the ruling on jobs that are too strenuous or dangerous for women be considered discriminatory?"

"The Constitution contains the answer to your question. It notes that equal rights are ensured, in particular, 'by special labour and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children'.

"This is how the above clause is carried out in practice: almost 70 research institutes, including one of the six AUCCTU Occupational Safety Research Institutes, conduct research in the field of women's occupational safety, creating the most favourable working conditions for them.

"This is why the first Soviet labour laws, adopted in 1918, forbade women to be employed in arduous

or dangerous jobs. A list of 80 jobs and professions dangerous to women was drawn up in 1932.

“The new list of jobs and professions considered too strenuous or dangerous for women is another step taken in this direction. The essence of this document is not discrimination, but, on the contrary, the creation of new privileges for women in the professional sphere.”

“Why was this list of jobs and professions enlarged?”

“For two reasons. First, the scientific and technological revolution has given rise to many new jobs and professions. Naturally, this called for a thorough revision of the existing list to include professions connected with such factors as vibration, high levels of noise, radiation, chemical evaporation, etc.

“Secondly, because the Soviet state is concerned about improving working conditions and safety measures for all women.

“Various state bodies, working together with the trade unions and medical establishments, conducted an in-depth study of this problem. The list of jobs considered unsuitable for women was drawn up with the help of such organisations as the All-Union Research Institute for Labour Hygiene and Occupational Diseases (the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences), the AUCCTU and its institutes, and all of the country’s ministries.

“Thus the new list now enumerates 460 professions and jobs closed to women.”

“What about the women who were relieved from these jobs?”

“They were transferred to easier jobs at other enterprises or were given the opportunity to learn a new trade. Women who chose the latter were paid

their former average monthly wages for six months while they were in training.

"Those women who were transferred to other jobs, kept their tenure. This is very important because continuity of service is instrumental in determining the amount of a pension, long-term service bonuses, etc. These women did not lose the deeds to flats provided by their former employers, and their pre-school age children continued to attend the factory nursery schools and kindergartens."

I interviewed thirty-year-old Nina Andreyeva at the Pererva depot of the Moscow Railway, to find out her attitude towards this change in her profession.

"After graduating from a secondary technical school, I worked as an assistant engine-driver for 10 years. Now this profession is closed to me: it is connected with nervous and emotional strain and night shifts. And I have two children. Now I have a new job: I'm an assistant station master. My wages have not changed."

Zoya Paskannaya is also the mother of two children. She worked at the Leningrad Tannery Amalgamation, where only 6 of the 2,000 women employed were engaged in arduous physical labour. All have now been transferred to lighter jobs.

"I was a sorter of large skins for 15 years," she said. "The job included lifting heavy weights. Now I'm a sorter of small skins. I like my new job, it's much easier than my old one, and there was no cut in my pay. I still get 180 rubles a month. We women have gained a lot from this change."

The Soviet state encourages women to increase their skills in all spheres of the economy. Thus, new privileges have been introduced for working mothers of children under 8 years of age who

receive vocational training. Now they can improve their skills while taking special leave from their jobs and still receive their usual pay during the entire training period.

The working conditions of 7 million Soviet women have been improved in the past few years. The shield that protects their health and motherhood is not discriminatory. On the contrary, they have acquired new privileges at their places of employment.

The Sun Should Not Set Twice

I first met Nina Genina, head of the obstetrical department at the Lvov Regional Mother and Child Care Hospital, fifteen years ago during a business trip to Lvov, an old city in the Western Ukraine. She had just delivered a child, and, showing him to me proudly, said: "This was an extremely difficult case, but all is well now."

Alexander Uzlyan, a photographer for *Ogonyok* magazine, took a picture of two women doctors in white caps and masks. One was holding up a screaming newborn boy.

The child's mother was also a journalist. When I came into the ward to visit her, I saw a young woman with blue eyes and a thick blonde braid. She was happy though exhausted. She told me she had been afraid to have a baby, because as a child she had lived through the Nazi occupation, hunger and cold and had been very frail.

After the end of World War II, she was at last examined by a doctor and was found to be suffering from heart disease. When she got married, she was told that she had best not have children. She read up on her case and knew that having a child would be a great risk for both her and the baby. The

embryo could suffer from a lack of oxygen and the delivery might be a dangerous ordeal.

Even if the mother had a normal delivery, the baby could be born with respiratory problems or a faulty metabolism. And the infant might need emergency treatment to supply him with all that his mother's system had failed to provide him with. Only then would he be able to grow and develop normally.

"And still, you took the risk?" I asked.

"Yes. How can a woman live without children? Now I have a son."

Years passed. This autumn a woman called my name at a Crimean beach. I saw the same large blue eyes and a knot of blonde hair. It was Dr. Genina's former high risk patient.

The woman, whose name is Olga, introduced her son to me. She laughed and said: "Remember him? He weighed 3,550 grammes and was 50 centimetres long. Now he lifts me insteads of weights."

As I looked at the tanned, muscular adolescent who was listening to his mother with a shy grin, I recalled the picture in *Ogonyok* taken at the Lvov Hospital delivery room in 1968. Dr. Genina was shown helping to deliver this same boy.

Following is my report from the obstetrical department, made fifteen years ago, when Taras, Olga's son, was born.

I am reporting from the Lvov Regional Mother and Child Care Hospital. Before entering the obstetrical department, I was dressed in a doctor's gown and cap.

There are many funny stories about future fathers in hospital waiting rooms. Before the baby is born, relatives try to guess whether to buy a blue or a pink blanket.

But in this maternity home there is more than the

usual anxiety that accompanies birth, this is a hospital where childbirth is risky, both for the mother and the child.

An Echo of the War

Experienced obstetricians who are far from being sentimental say this about Dr. Genina:

"She treats every patient as though she were her own daughter. She's here almost every night and on holidays, too. If there's an especially difficult case, we always send for her and know that she'll come without fail."

I am in Delivery Room No. 1. It is late afternoon. Through the frosted windows I can see the red disk of the setting sun. I was told here that the sun should not set twice during a delivery, for childbirth should not last more than a day and a night.

Dr. Genina's face is concealed by a mask, but I sense her efficiency and alertness. This is a difficult case, and she is assisted by 8 doctors, some of whom are regular advisers from the Lvov Research Institute of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The hospital is a branch of the Institute.

At last we hear the child's loud cry. Another person has entered the world.

Dr. Genina leaves the delivery room to take a short break and have a cup of tea.

"We help women who suffer from heart, liver and kidney diseases and those who are having premature babies — anyone for whom childbirth is a risk. One of the reasons why some of these mothers have difficulties is because they were war children, children of the Leningrad Blockade, children who survived shelling and starvation and suffered with rickets, and whose health was seriously undermined. Some were born in concentration camps, others saw their parents being tortured and killed

or were tortured themselves. We are faced with a difficult task, for we are battling with the war here, so many years after it has ended."

She was silent for a moment, then passed her hand over her face, as if to dispel memories, and said suddenly:

"You know childbirth is not as difficult for slim women. The beauty and harmony of the body help to deliver the child. Weak legs and excess weight are our enemies. I always advise women to take up sports. In this way they can help us and themselves.

"Love is another assistant in childbirth. When a woman is loved she has an additional reserve of confidence and tenacity which are essential here."

Dr. Genina has four grown daughters; yet the hospital staff says she has about forty thousand boys and girls she has delivered through the years.

Mothers and Fathers

The wards are bright and sunny. The hospital p.a. system is broadcasting suggestions for future mothers. Those who have already given birth disregard the suggestions lightheartedly and go on chatting. They have now entered a new stage of their lives, one filled with new responsibilities.

The new mothers attend the hospital school for mothers. At first glance the young women look like girls playing dolls. These grown-up girls with pale serious faces, dressed in hospital gowns sit around a diapering table and inspect the medicines, pacifiers and white tub.

Nineteen-year-old Lidiya K., a collective farm worker from Kupche Village is writing down a list of dietary supplements for the child. Natalya R., a chemist and teacher at the Lvov Agricultural Institute, stops by the diapering table to show the

doctor how she used to diaper her first daughter and asks whether the method has changed.

She said to me: "I wanted to have a boy very much and also to defend my candidate's degree. I defended my degree, and now I have a son, though the delivery was rather difficult."

The women of different occupations and nationalities have come to the hospital from towns and villages in the Western Ukraine. If someone were to tell them that in the USA a delivery costs hundreds of dollars, they would be amazed, because they have grown up in a country where medical care for expectant mothers is free.

Four fathers—a fitter, engineer, barber and student—are in the hospital's waiting room. One steps forward to meet his young wife and newborn daughter. They get into a car and ride off.

That day I overheard the following conversation in the waiting room. Bogdan G., a young man who is a bulldozer driver, had just brought his wife to the hospital. He said to Dr. Genina:

"I want a child very much, and I don't care whether it's a boy or a girl, but will my wife pull through?"

"She certainly will," Dr. Genina replied and hurried off to the delivery room.

Today, Dr. Genina, bearer of the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour is 75 years old. You can still meet her at the hospital, where she now works on a voluntary basis, teaching young obstetricians, taking part in doctors' consultations and helping out in the department now headed by Dr. Emiliya Galas, once her student.

Dr. Genina devoted her life to seeing that the sun never set twice during a delivery, to bringing healthy children into the world, children like Taras M., whom I met on the beach in the Crimea.

A Citadel of Surgeons

The Central Research Institute of Traumatic Surgery and Orthopedics is located at 10 Priorov St., Moscow. It consists of many buildings and resembles a small town, or, rather a citadel of surgeons. Day and night emergency operations are performed here. The staff surgeons do wonders: they can re-attach a severed hand, replace an injured bone with a titanium-cobalt prosthesis made in the Institute's shop, extend a short leg or put a knee cap into place with the help of ultrasound.

The Institute is full of contrasts and paradoxes. The patients speak many languages, for they come here from all 15 Union Republics, and from all over the world as well. Hundreds of doctors from dozens of countries – Italy, Canada, and Mauritius, to name but a few – receive training here. The surgeons are aided by people whose professions are, at first glance, far removed from medicine: welders, engineers, fitters, swimming coaches and secondary school teachers. The operating rooms are connected with a research plant by an underground corridor, and the wards adjoin a designing office and a swimming pool.

The Institute is a symbol of courage and optimism. People here are put back on their feet both literally and figuratively speaking. Hopelessness is replaced by hope and long suffering by recovery. Konstantin K. from Minsk, born with a congenital defect to the spinal column, took his first steps here at the age of 12. He is now a doctor and walks without crutches or a cane.

I spoke about this with Prof. Mstislav Volkov, Full Member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, the Raymond Denis international prize of surgeons, who has been the head of the Institute for

over twenty years. His special field is bone pathology in children orthopedics.

Past and Present

Hundreds of volumes of research, dozens of films and 3,000 articles published in Soviet and foreign scientific journals have recorded the Institute's work since it was founded in 1921, soon after the establishment of Soviet power. The Institute was built to treat the casualties of World War I and the Civil War, and to work out new methods in orthopedics and prosthetic appliances.

This is what Prof. Volkov says of the present:

"The Institute's staff is made up of 1,400 people, including 600 research workers and doctors and professors of medicine. We have 12 clinical departments for adults and children, 10 operating rooms (one of which is on 24-hour duty), 16 laboratories, a scientific-technological department and a research plant.

"Our chief tasks include research in trauma and orthopedics and searching for new ways to combat disease. We also direct our efforts towards finding better prophylactic measures to prevent orthopedic disorders. Our Institute is the country's leading research establishment in this field.

"The Institute is open to every citizen of the USSR, and treatment here, as in any other Soviet hospital, is free of charge."

The USSR State Committee on Inventions and Discoveries has registered a number of inventions by Prof. Volkov and Prof. Oganesian, Honoured Inventor of the RSFSR, both of whom work at the Central Research Institute of Traumatic Surgery and Orthopedics.

"Fifteen years ago we began working on the pro-



A lesson of English at school



Young ballerinas during practice



Russian dance

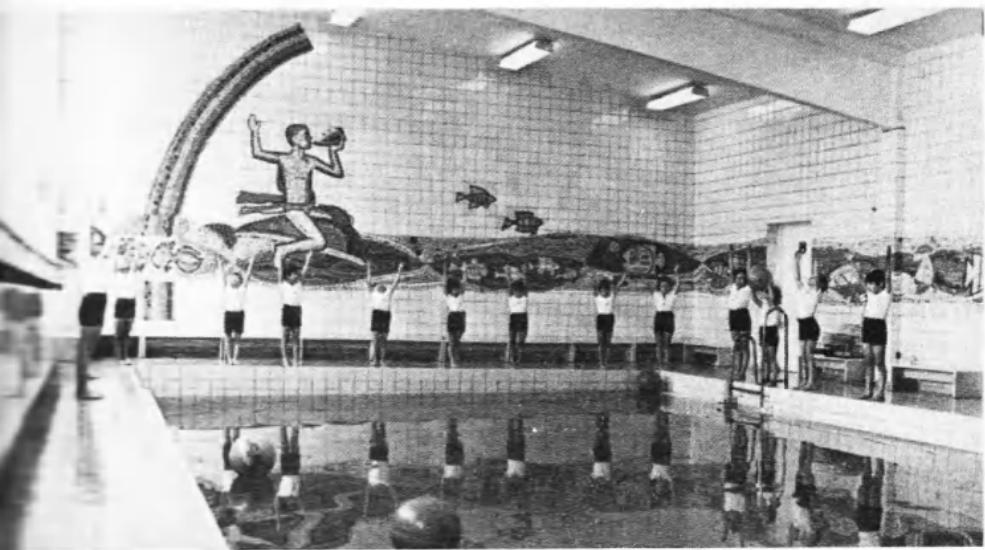


The Omsk Young Pioneers' Palace. An astronomy study circle



Singing for our mothers on Women's Day

Warming up before a lesson in swimming





Sergey Obraztsov, People's Artist of the Soviet Union and director and producer of the USSR Central Puppet Theatre

How interesting!





Doctor and patient

Dr. G. Zhuravleva and a patient in a district polyclinic for children





In the museum of Yuri Gagarin, the earth's first cosmonaut. Chatting with Gagarin's mother, Anna Timofeevna, is corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences Prof. Vyacheslav Tabolin. "How did you raise such a son?"



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Freda Brown, President of the Women's International Democratic Federation, and Valentina Tereshkova, a cosmonaut and Vice-President of WIDF, in the presidium of the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Happy Future for All Children."

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This photo was taken in March of 1944 at the Ozarechi death camp, just liberated from the Nazis. A child near his dead mother

This grandson of a front-line soldier is against war





Fly, doves, fly!

blem of repairing a damaged joint cartilage without operating or using casts, which can lead to the atrophy of the muscles.

"We designed appliances which worked on a hinge-distractional principle and which could be inserted into the bones. Gradually, the bones of the joint are stretched apart until a slit needed for normal motion is formed between them."

I saw adults and children of various ages here wearing these appliances on their shoulder, elbow or knee joints. All will soon be able to move their injured limbs freely.

These hinge-distractional appliances are manufactured by the Institute's research plant. Over 50 hospitals in the USSR and abroad have been successfully using them in their practice. The inventors have 18 patents for the appliance in the USA, Great Britain, France, the FRG, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan and other countries.

Straightening Out People

Naturally, a child who is brought to the Institute is not aware that there are three clinics for treating children – Orthopedics, Trauma and Bone Pathology – but he immediately feels that all those who surround him are kind people. The Institute has a swimming pool, playrooms, TV rooms and even an amateur puppet theatre.

This is what ten-year-old Kolya P. told me while he manipulated a hand puppet. I recalled that "orthopedics" in Greek means "the science of straightening a body". The Institute's doctors have made great progress in this respect. Children with traumatic injuries, as well as those with injuries to the motor system are treated at the Institute's Children's Trauma Clinic. Dr. Valentina Stuzhina,

Candidate of Medical Sciences and a surgeon, spoke to me about the clinic.

“Most of our emergency cases are young patients from Moscow who have sustained traumatic injuries while playing or as the result of an automobile accident. But the Clinic also treats injured children from all over the Soviet Union and from abroad as well: the GDR, Bulgaria, Greece, and Lebanon often send us difficult cases.

“Here the children receive treatment and are tutored. The daily lessons and homework help the doctors, for they distract the children from their injuries and sad thoughts.

“All school subjects are taught by regular school-teachers, and every department has its own instructor. Lidiya Soldatova is the instructor for our department. She is the children’s foster mother and also helps them with their lessons so that they do not fall behind in their studies. She tries to keep the children happy. That is why we have parties, concerts and puppet theatre performances so often.”

“You’re a pediatric surgeon. What can you say about your work?”

“I’ve been with the Institute for sixteen years. It is a very difficult job, but I can’t imagine my life without it. I love children.

“I hate to have to break a child’s bone to reset it, even though it is done under anaesthesia and there is no pain. But when a child leaves the hospital, walking normally—and 99.9 per cent of all children with traumatic injuries recover completely—it repays me in full for all the anguish.”

“Which of your numerous patients do you remember best?”

“Rana Z., a nine-year-old Lebanese girl, who was wounded in the hip by an Israeli bullet that also injured her sciatic nerve. She was successfully oper-

ated on and was recently discharged. However, we are still worried about her future.

"I can't forget Borya M., who broke his hip and leg when he was thirteen. The operation was an extremely difficult one. He visited me at the hospital recently and brought me a bouquet of flowers. 'I had to pass a very strict medical exam before I was able to enroll in flying school. Now I'll be a pilot, as I always wished to be,' he said.

"Many years ago Sasha R. was brought to our hospital with an open fracture of the tibia. The operation was a success. He grew up, married and returned one day with his newborn child for us to have a look at the baby with a 'professional' eye, so to speak. Many of our young patients are grown, and they bring their own children to see us. This goes to show that they trust us.

"The doctors at our clinic do everything possible to eliminate the aftereffects of an injury. We do very delicate surgery and stitch together the tiniest bits of tissue."

The Institute's patients call the surgeons magicians.

The doctors think this is an exaggeration. This is what they say: "We don't perform miracles. This is our routine work."

A Day With Professor Tabolin

The Filatov Children's Hospital is a branch of the 2nd Moscow Medical Institute's Faculty of Pediatrics. One summer morning I came here to interview Prof. Vyacheslav Tabolin, head of the faculty and Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences. There was a photograph on the wall of the waiting room outside his

office. It was of a room in a village house with a portrait of Yuri Gagarin, the world's first cosmonaut on the wall. Standing by it were Gagarin's mother, Anna Timofeyevna, and a greying man of about fifty with a typical Russian face wearing glasses.

"Who's that?" I asked.

"Tabolin."

"He looks like a teacher or an engineer."

"You're right. He's not only a doctor, he's a teacher as well. He also studied at the Moscow Bau-man Higher Technical School."

I was led past a crowd of students in white smocks with stethoscopes around their necks, and walked into a large auditorium where the student doctors were taking an exam.

Tabolin was looking through Natalya Amelina's term paper. It was entitled "The Rational Feeding of Infants". Next was the most important part of the exam. Natalya began to discuss the case of nine-year-old Petya O. and suggested what she believed to be the best treatment for him.

When she had finished speaking, Prof. Tabolin said:

"It is difficult to be a pediatrician, you must always be on the alert. Your mind must always be occupied with the sick child: you examine him in the evening, think about him at night, try to find the best possible treatment, and examine him again in the morning.

"You must maintain close contact with the child and follow the example of your teachers. It was a pleasure to watch my teacher, Dr. Georgy Speransky, examine a child. The child is our primary concern.

"Always treat children with kindness. Study other branches of sciences. Dr. Speransky, Hero of

Socialist Labour, said: 'Pediatrics means all of medicine and all of science put together.' He retired when he was 90 years old. Now you, my student, are to treat children according to his teaching.

"Your answers are well-founded. I can see that you understand the child, and you filled out the prescription correctly."

Thinking About the Future

At the Department of Newborn Pathology I watched through a glass wall as Prof. Tabolin examined a child who was only several days old (his special field is neonatal pediatrics). I could hear the questions he addressed to the doctor: "Does he nurse actively? Does he cry? Does he vomit? How much does he weigh?"

Then he asked for a detailed medical history of the infant's parents.

"A child's health depends on the health of his family," he told me after he had left the ward. "In order to properly evaluate the newborn's condition we must know his heredity, the mother's condition during pregnancy and whether the birth was a difficult one. Even though an infant has just been born, we can predict what illnesses he is likely to contract and, at the same time, we can help to prevent them. Early diagnosis and treatment are a guarantee of good health."

The pediatricians I spoke to about Prof. Tabolin all praised his rare talent as a diagnostician. He has devoted many years to the problem of early diagnosis of pathology in children. *Heredity Diseases in Children*, written jointly by Prof. Vyacheslav Tabolin, Prof. Levon Badalian and Prof. Yuri Veltishchev, is but one of his many works.

"How did you become a pediatrician?" I asked Prof. Tabolin.

He replied: "Tragic circumstances influenced my choice of a career.

"I was born into a large peasant family in the Vladimir Region. My mother, Lyubov Vasilyevna, had six sons. She was a wise woman and we had a strict upbringing, though she never spanked us. She was a simple peasant woman, but she loved to read and tried to bring out the best abilities in each of us. For instance she taught me to tend the bees in our hives.

"When World War II broke out I became a medical orderly in a field hospital and I went in for medicine with zeal. After I was discharged, I enrolled in the Moscow Bauman Higher Technical School and intended to become an engineer. After studying for three years, I was told by doctors that I would lose my eyesight in a year.

"I stopped to think. 'I have a whole year of real life before me,' I said to myself. 'I must devote it to doing what I like best. I'll become a pediatrician.'

"I did not go blind, and six years later I graduated from the 2nd Moscow Medical Institute. I was put on the staff of the Faculty of Pediatrics under Prof. Georgy Speransky. Ever since I have had only one wish."

"And what is that?"

"To help children."

**We Cure, Teach
and Conduct Research**

Ten years after graduating, Prof. Tabolin became the chief doctor of the Children's Hospital he has headed for the past twenty years.

“What problems are you working on at present?”

“The problem of healthy children. It is a problem that faces both pediatricians and society as a whole. A healthy child means a happy family and a strong country. The state helps us pediatricians ensure good health for the children. I am speaking about Lenin’s ageless principle: ‘Everything that is best is for children’, a principle born of the October Revolution and in force today in all spheres of our life. In the medical sphere this includes nation-wide mother and child care directed at preventing disease.

“Our laboratory and diagnostic centre, which I shall now show you, serves this particular aim.”

As we headed for the centre, Prof. Tabolin said:

“The centre is composed of numerous laboratories and departments. These are the hematology and biochemistry departments and the laboratories for emergency diagnosis and immunology. We conduct 600 analyses every day – 12 different tests on each of our 50 patients.

“Our centre is the largest in the country, but similar ones will soon be built in all the major cities of the USSR.”

“How large is the faculty staff and what problems are now being studied?”

“We have 20 teachers (including professors) and a group of 10 researchers, most of whom are Candidates of Medical Sciences. They are all highly skilled.

“The problems we are working on are the physiology and pathology of the newborn and infants. We study hereditary and acquired metabolic disorders, perinatology, neonatology, nephrology, pulmonology.

“We cure, teach and conduct research.”

“You spoke very highly of the faculty staff. How do you share your knowledge and skill with the rest of the country?”

Prof. Tabolin went over to a map of the RSFSR. He said:

“Ours is the leading research establishment in its field in the Russian Federation. Our staff doctors regularly give lectures and reports in the Kaluga, Tambov, Oryol and Vladimir regions. They act as consultants to the children’s clinics and hospitals there. I, for one, am called on regularly as a consultant.”

There are two other doctors in Tabolin’s family: his wife, Svetlana, a forensic expert, and his twenty-four-year-old daughter Olga, also a pediatrician. Tatyana, his elder daughter, is an ethnographer.

When he told me that he had two grandchildren, two-year-old Anna and one-year-old Dmitry, I asked him:

“What would you wish for your grandchildren when they grow up? What moral values do you esteem most?”

“The old values: generosity, modesty and honesty.”

“What sort of people do you dislike?”

“Hypocrites and dishonest people. All those who are spiritual paupers.”

“What do you do in your spare time?”

“I like to go to Donskoi Monastery. I especially like the *David and Goliath* high-relief there. I like to read the legends and myths of other lands.

“I also love poetry. It is relaxing reading.”

Principle 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child reads: "The child ... shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother.... Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable."

In this chapter we will examine the life of the Soviet family and the relationship between parents and children. The family—"the unique cell of society"—fulfils many purposes. According to sociologists, it has four basic roles: demographic, economic, educational and psychological.

Yuri Rurikov, writer and sociologist, said: "The family (a happy, normal family) is the fundamental psychological cell of society in which the love of the husband and wife is combined with the love of the parents for their children and with the love of the children for their parents. A blending of these three types of love can produce a unique, beneficial atmosphere for both the parents and the children.

"The family plays a very important social role. A good family promotes progress and, in this way, enhances the life of society, while a troubled family creates endless problems.

“Caring for a child allows us to develop essential human qualities in our relationships with others: sympathy and compassion. On becoming a mother or father we come to know for the first time the highest ideal of a human relationship.

“Children are one of the greatest assets of life, and a source of happiness. This holds true under the following conditions: if they are healthy, and if our attitude towards them is correct. Lacking these conditions, children cannot bring us much joy.”¹

Bringing up children is a reciprocal process: our children give us as much as we give them. They are our natural and unobtrusive teachers.

One of the most important spiritual processes takes place within the family: the development of the individual who sustains social relations and is the chief element of the productive forces. The level of the productive forces, social relations and the health of the social organism all depend upon the quality of this process.

Sergei Libikh, Doctor of Psychology:

“A girl needs a father as much as a boy does, for while a mother satisfies a child’s emotional needs, a father gives the child a sense of security, psychological protection, discipline, confidence and independence. A boy learns how to fulfil his future role as a man in society from his father and a girl often chooses a husband who resembles him.”²

Vasily Sukhomlinsky, a Soviet pedagogue, researcher and writer, said:

“A mother must remember that she is the child’s most important teacher, and that the future of society depends upon her...

¹ *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, February 11, 1981.

² *Soviet Woman*, 1981, No. 8, p. 25.

“...No matter what facets of human nature you reveal to the child: approval, praise, admiration, anger, indignation, reproach, ... you must reveal every one of them against a background of respect for human dignity.

“...A good upbringing will make the child aware of all that is despicable, avert him from it and encourage him to overcome it. This is a *humane* upbringing...

“Only those who have learned the wisdom of limiting their freedom and desires in childhood can learn to value life and freedom. This wisdom is one of the most delicate instruments of upbringing. A thoughtless attitude towards freedom and the inability to control one's desires can turn a child into a little tyrant...”

“We must evolve a responsible attitude towards the family and the upbringing of children. We must propagandise the ideals of parenthood and cultivate among the youth the skills of homemaking, child care, family recreation, and physical culture.”
(From the Report of the YCL Central Committee to the 19th Congress of the YCL.)

These are only a few of the ideas on the family expressed by Soviet sociologists, pedagogues, psychologists, and the Young Communist League.

But what is family life really like? What is the Soviet system of child education?

One of 66 Million

The Kolesov family is one of the country's 66 million families. (According to the latest census, 29.7 per cent of all families consist of 2 members; 28.9 per cent consist of 3 members; 23 per cent consist of 4 members, and 18.4 per cent consist of 5 or

more members. The average family consists of 3.5 members.) There are four people in this family, and we shall come to know them.

Anatoly Kolesov drives a Metro train. His wife, Vera Kolesova, is the chief inspector at one of the industrial amalgamations, head of the local trade union committee and member of the union's children's commission. She begins her day by signing agreements for equipment delivery, writing business letters and placing phone calls to the Amalgamation's subsidiaries in Novosibirsk. She takes advantage of a break to give her colleagues winter holiday passes to a Young Pioneer camp for their children.

The family gets together in the evening. Masha, the eldest child in the family, is back from school, and Alexander, her younger brother, is home from kindergarten. One such evening I visited the Kolesovs. Their flat is on the 7th floor of a 9-storey apartment building located in Strogino, one of Moscow's new housing developments.

Biographies of Those Born After the War

The story of this family must begin with the story of the fathers. During World War II Anatoly's father, Yakov Kolesov, a worker before the war, became a pilot in the Air Force. Vera's father, Alexander Kuznetsov, who had also been a worker, became a private in the artillery. Both were in active service throughout the war. They were wounded and suffered from shellshock, and both died while relatively young soon after the end of the war.

A long, wide ribbon hangs on the wall in the children's room. Their grandfathers' orders and medals are attached to it. I joined Masha and Alex-

ander in looking at the awards and holding the heavy time-darkened Order of Glory awarded to privates for exceptional valour. I looked at the oil-paintings done by the former pilot.

The children were affected by the loss of their fathers. Anatoly left school after the 8th grade and, after graduating from a vocational school, went to work as an adjuster at the Stankoagregat plant. Nine years ago he decided to become an engine-driver and went to work at the Moscow Metro, where he started in from the bottom, cleaning the cars and doing metal-work. Now he is an engine-driver, 2nd class, and has been awarded For Valour in Labour medal. The total length of the Moscow Metro lines is 200 kilometres, Anatoly's line, the Preobrazhenskaya - Yugo-Zapadnaya is 23-km long. Anatoly attends night classes at the Moscow Institute of Railway Engineers, Automation and Telemechanics Department.

"It must be difficult to hold such a strenuous job, have a family and study in the evenings," I said to Anatoly.

"I have always been interested in mathematics, chemistry, geometry and English. Besides, I can help my daughter with her homework now."

"What about you, Vera? Do you consider your education complete?"

"Not at all. I want to become an economist and I'm just waiting my turn. I'll begin my studies when Anatoly graduates. Right now the children need me, and I spend all my evenings with them."

Love at Second Sight

"We got married when we were both eighteen," Vera said. "We met by chance at a stadium. Friends invited me to a basketball game, and Anatoly was

one of the players. When we were introduced, I merely glanced at him. Several days later when his friends mentioned his name, I felt as if something had hit me. It was 'love at second sight'.

"At seventeen we were discussing marriage. We were both working and independent. On Anatoly's eighteenth birthday (I turned eighteen the day before) we applied for a marriage licence."

Is this a typical situation?

Let us examine the motives for marriage. Sociological surveys conducted among young people reveal that 94 per cent of all Soviet newly-weds consider "love and only love" the moral ideal of marriage and add that sexual and spiritual relations must be in harmony. Young people, as a rule, believe that they have carefully selected their marriage partner. This is how Anatoly and Vera felt also.

As for the age of couples entering into marriage, sociologists state that no more than 25 per cent of all young people in the USSR enter into marriage before reaching the age of 20 (61 per cent of young women questioned were married between 20 and 23 years of age, and 49 per cent of the young men questioned married between 23 and 26 years of age).

"What were the first problems you faced after you were married?" I asked.

I gathered from Vera's reply that the first real problems appeared with the birth of their children. This was a problem of cramped living quarters, and it took some time before the problem was solved.

"Now, as you see, we have a large four-room apartment with a nice balcony and view of the Moskva River."

The problem of living space remains a common one according to sociologists: young couples want

to live independently of their parents and have their own apartment. Although 2 million new apartments are completed each year there are still not enough to go around.

“What can you say now that you have been married for 12 years?”

“They say that most people are disillusioned with their marriage,” Vera replied. “But you can’t say that about us. I respect and admire my husband. He is a fine, considerate person.”

Anatoly, who is not very talkative, told me, “I remember the day I met Vera. She was pretty and vivacious. I now know her better than her own mother does. Over the years I have become convinced that she is just the kind of wife I need, a woman who understands me.”

Zoya Yankova, a Soviet sociologist, says: “The spiritual bond between husband and wife is the most important indication of a happy marriage. Neither social nor professional background, age or nationality have anything to do with this... What is needed is mutual understanding and a common outlook on life. By the way, this outlook may be influenced by the family. Either one or both partners may change their views. Sometimes this mutual understanding is only created with the passing of years. This is what is called creating love.”

Income and Expenditures

We discussed the family’s budget over a cup of tea. The Kolesovs, as most Russian families, do not keep a detailed account of their expenditures, but they have a general idea of their major expenses. Their income consists of their combined monthly salaries: 390 rubles.

It should be noted here that their salaries do not

comprise their total income. One should also bear in mind social consumption funds, the invisible rubles of allotments and benefits which the state or a given enterprise sets aside from its budget for social and cultural needs. This is done to provide an equal standard of living for all citizens. These funds guarantee free medical care, free education (up to and including university education), free and subsidised stays at sanatoriums, resorts, children's summer camps, as well as the care of children in nursery schools and kindergartens, state allotments for living quarters, etc.

If the average monthly salary of factory and office workers is 177 rubles, their actual income, including the above allotments and benefits, is 242 rubles a month.

This is the Kolesovs' monthly budget: rent (including electricity, gas, water and heating) – 25 rubles; food – over 200 rubles; clothing, shoes, appliances, newspapers, magazines, books, etc. – over 100 rubles; kindergarten for the younger child – 12 rubles (one-fifth of the actual cost – the rest is provided by social consumption funds). The cost of education for the elder child is not even included in the family budget, as it is free. If all these additional benefits granted to a family of four (husband, wife and two children) were to be expressed in rubles, the amount would total 1,760 rubles a year.

The Kolesov Children

“Our mothers are young grandmothers who are still working,” Vera said. “So they couldn’t help us when the children were very young as so many grandmothers who have retired do. We sent the children to nursery school and then to kindergarten.”

Eleven-year-old Masha is in the fifth grade. She is on the editorial board of the school wall newspaper and active in school events. She is a thoughtful, impressionable girl, but also capable of determined action.

Vera says she is good in English, but likes drawing best of all. Masha wants to become a restorer of old paintings. She decided this would be her life's work after visiting one of Moscow's museums. She was struck by an 18th-century Russian portrait of a man, in the corner of which, beneath a thin layer of paint, was a woman's face.

"I want to discover and restore old paintings," Masha told me.

"You need to know more than drawing," her father added. "You've got to study history, literature and art. Let's go to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts again."

Alexander, who was named after his grandfather, is five years old. He is an active, fair-haired boy who likes kindergarten. His parents believe that a family upbringing combined with a social upbringing produces excellent results.

Alexander likes music and drawing lessons and gymnastics. He is preparing for school and can read and count. He wrote the words "Mother" and "Nastya" (one of his little friends in kindergarten) for me on a blackboard in his room.

The range of the parents' interests has a favourable influence upon the children's development. There are a lot of books in the house, including the classics: Ivan Turgenev, Lev Tolstoy, William Faulkner, Charles Dickens, Romain Rolland, Lion Feuchtwanger, Anna Seghers. The parents are both art lovers. They go in for sports and have taught their children to skate and ski.

“We try to pass all we know on to our children.”
Vera said.

Vacation Time

Anatoly and Vera told me that Masha goes to a Young Pioneer camp for two months every summer, while Alexander goes off to the country for the whole summer with his kindergarten.

The parents usually vacation in the Caucasus, or in Vera’s mother’s cottage at Lake Valdai. It is beautiful there and they both love to fish.

During the last winter school vacation, Vera and the children stayed at a hostel in Pushkino, a town not far from Moscow. The trade union paid the total cost for two accommodations and 70 per cent for one. This is how Vera described their stay: “I loved it. There was a ball room, a cinema, and a skating rink. We had a nice suite with a bathroom. Anatoly visited us on Sundays, went skiing with the children, had dinner with us and returned home in the late afternoon.”

Housework As a Trial

Sometimes a major topic will only come up at the end of a conversation. I asked Vera how she managed to combine a job, raising two children and the housework. According to sociological data, women today spend twice as much time doing housework as their husbands. Though the system of communal services has been increased and improved, the problem of equal distribution of household chores between husband and wife remains a great one. Some men either refuse to help their wives with chores, or do so grudgingly.

Zoya Yankova, the sociologist mentioned above, says: “This destroys the family. I, for one, believe

"that a husband who comes home from work and starts dinner, or washes up afterwards, actually demonstrates his love for his wife."

That is why I asked Vera:

"Who does the housework in your family?"

"Every one has his own responsibilities. Anatoly picks up Alexander on his way home from work. He's the handyman around the house and also does the shopping. And he can make delicious pancakes and fry eggs. The children see this and also try to help."

"Masha buys small items of food. She knows when we need to buy more cereal, flour and vegetables. She's taking home economics at school and has learned to cook a little, make an apron, and knit a hat and mittens. In the morning she makes breakfast and sandwiches for Anatoly to take to work. She is a real help. Alexander sweeps the floor, helps wash the dishes and makes his bed."

The situation in this family reflects the results of sociological surveys conducted among young Moscow couples. Equal participation of husband and wife in household chores is more typical of young families. In 65 per cent of young families, the husband and wife share their duties; 35 per cent of these families have achieved full co-operation. The number of happy couples is larger in this group. And a happy couple has happy children.

Large Families in the USSR

Soviet mothers enjoy the respect of all. Mothers of ten children are awarded the Mother Heroine Order (it has been presented to 324,000 women). The Order of Maternity Glory, founded in 1944,

has been awarded to 4,730,000 mothers of seven, eight, or nine children, and the Medal of Motherhood has been awarded to 11,390,000 mothers of five or six children.

Since 1981 working mothers and mothers who are students, are eligible to receive a 50-ruble allowance for the birth of their first child and a 100-ruble allowance for the birth of their second or third child. Families with four and more children receive monthly allowances (apart from the single allowance for the birth of a child).

Large families enjoy the following additional privileges: they do not pay for the care of their children in nursery schools or kindergartens; they pay only half of their rent bill; they are put at the head of the waiting list for new housing (in accordance with Article 20 of the Fundamentals of Housing Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics, which states that this right is guaranteed to "mothers awarded the Mother-Heroine title; to large families; to unmarried mothers; and to families with twins").

Mothers of large families are also granted additional pension privileges: mothers of five or more children are eligible to receive old-age pensions five years before other women and their length of service is less.

This is the story of Antonina Valyayeva, a woman worker.

"I have six children. We live in Rostov-on-Don. I want to tell you what has been done for our family. We used to live in a cramped flat, so I went to the Regional Executive Committee and spoke to the Chairman, N. Ivanitsky. He asked me how much I earned at the construction site (where I have been working for 20 years), who my husband was and how the children were making out at school. I said

He have five schoolchildren in the family. Then he said: 'You know we are still short of housing, but we certainly must provide your family with a good flat as quickly as possible.'

"Soon after a house was built for our Amalgamation. A spacious six-room flat of 96 square metres was specially designed for our family. I cannot even tell how happy we were, especially the children. My shipmates helped us move in and the trade union helped us buy the furniture. This is the special attention large families get..."

Do We Know Our Children?

Boris and Lena Nikitin's family, which consists of three adults and seven children, live in Bolshevo, not far from Moscow. The ground-floor rooms of their house are rather unusual: there are two horizontal bars, dumb-bells, a ladder, hoops, wooden bricks and shelves with books, dolls and erector sets. In the living room there is an old piano and low armchairs. The bedrooms are upstairs.

The method the parents have used in bringing up their children has aroused great interest both in the USSR and abroad. A film has been made about the family, *A Day in the Nikitin Family*, and Boris and Lena have written three books: *Are We Right?*, *Steps of Creativity* and *We and Our Children*. They receive mail from all the Union republics, the GDR, Japan, France, Hungary and Bulgaria. Here are some of the questions they have been asked: "Why should a child of 3 read?" "Why should there be math tables and gym equipment in the children's room?", "Why do your children go barefoot in the snow? You're ruining their lives. They

will be constantly sick." So on and so forth.

Dr. Nikolai Amosov, Academician of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and Hero of Socialist Labour, says:

"I was interested in seeing how the Nikitins' unique method of raising their children influenced the children's personality formation. This is why I went to Bolshevo. Boris Nikitin met me at the station with a few of his children. They were all dressed in summer clothes and looked quite comfortable, though it was late October, and there were snow flurries. I spent a day with the family and learned all I had come to find out. It is impossible to see into a person's soul in such a short time, but the children impressed me very much. I examined them as a doctor. They were all strong and, undoubtedly, healthy.

"As far as their behaviour is concerned, they are uninhibited and independent. There are no strict routines or schedules in the life of this family. It would, after all, be rather difficult to introduce a schedule in a family with seven children and working parents. Each is a part of the whole. It is a family in the full sense of the word.

"...I did not find the children to be young intellectuals or prodigies. But they were certainly bright with alert, imaginative minds and well-developed speech. They were from two to four grades ahead of their peers. I wondered what difficulties they had in their relations with their teachers.

"I was not convinced by all I learned about their school life. I do not think it is necessary for a child to graduate from secondary school at 12 years of age instead of 17. When they do, they undoubtedly need to follow a special curriculum. Otherwise, they will regress. Moreover, skipping grades is not at all harmless from a psychological point of view and

may be connected with some danger which is still to be studied.

"There is no proof yet that today's 'A' student will necessarily become a talented professional. It is possible that the 'limits of intellect' are determined by the genes and that even early training cannot exceed these limits. But correct educational programmes for pre-schoolers can substantially increase the intellectual potential of a nation. That is why the experience gained by the Nikitins is so valuable.

"The Nikitins' system cultivates in the children a feeling of solidarity and a true interest in work. These are perhaps the chief conditions of forming a communist morality. To this end, the significance of the experience accumulated by Boris and Lena Nikitin cannot be overlooked."

This is what Lena Nikitina wrote about her children:

"The question that bothers me most is: Do we really know our children? This question may seem strange. Of course we know them, but I mean something else. Does a mother, for instance, know why her son has tossed in bed for so long before falling asleep? I asked different women similar questions and was amazed when many of them smiled skeptically and replied that it is enough if a child is healthy and fed and clothed properly. There is no time for 'the rest'.

"A new mother reads all the instructions about sterilising bottles, keeping the baby's room aired and spotless, keeping to the feeding schedules, etc. There is very little time left for reflecting and observing, and often her relationship with her baby is monotonous and primitive. At first this is often inevitable. But what happens later? The years pass and the mother continues to provide the necessary

services. Sometimes this turns into providing her child with the best of everything, up to and including a successful career and marriage. This is frightening, because a child requires something else in order to become a worthy individual.

“At first I did not understand this. But, my children taught me.

“I would come home tired from work. But I had no right to be tired – there were so many things to do at home. The children would run up to me, each eager to share his own news. But how could I set aside my chores and listen to them?

“‘Mum! See, what we’ve got.’

“‘Not now. Let me unload the shopping bag.’

“‘Mum! Today...’

“‘Wait. You’re in my way. This is a hot pot. You’ll get burned.’

“‘Mummy, I want to...’

“‘Let’s get undressed first. Give me your foot, now your hand.’

“Then I noticed that they were not running to meet me and had stopped sharing their news with me. I had to ask.

“This made me stop and think. Now, when I come home in the evenings, I listen to each one of them before I even take off my coat. This is very important. If you put it off till later, new events and the general routine will push what the child has to tell you – right away, immediately – into the background, and something will be lost forever. There can be no excuses for this, not a waxed floor, spotless kitchen, or an exotic dinner. They can all wait. The child alone cannot wait.

“It is worth putting off everything if only to look into each other’s eyes. This is what decides whether new bonds of understanding and confidence will appear between you and your child, or if even the

These ones will be severed. It is very difficult to establish a lasting relationship. But it is the essence of motherhood.

"Some women will perhaps reproach me and say, 'You have not even mentioned the fathers. Don't they have a part in bringing up their children?' Of course, they do. I am just speaking about our family, where I was the one who established these relationships and my husband organised the children's activities: their studies, play and chores. In other families it may be the other way round. But I think that the delicate job of dealing with a child's soul is a woman's task.

"Every day I experience the same sensation: I feel I am torn to pieces and cannot find the time for all the things I must do. But when I see that I have achieved something definite, I am really happy. I feel I am moulding a person. As he develops I develop, too.

"Motherhood is not a sacrifice. By becoming a true friend to your child, you acquire a friend in him, one who can understand and help you, not only when he grows up, but even now, while he is still a child."

Lena Nikitina, a librarian who has been awarded the order of Maternity Glory, generously shares her experiences with parents from all over the country who come to meetings at this family's home.

The Fatherless Family

The Paradox of the Newly-Wed

Ludmila Kondakova was married fifteen years ago. She could not imagine on the happy day of her wedding, that her marriage would end. She knew

she was getting married for ever to the man she loved.

Prof. Anatoly Kharchev, a well-known Soviet sociologist, explains the difference between one's dreams and reality:

"The majority of newly-weds believe that only love is the basis of a stable family. However, according to surveys conducted among young couples who were not satisfied with their marriages, the majority had married for love. This should not be regarded as an argument in support of marriages of convenience. In a socialist society they have almost ceased to exist. There are at least two reasons for this paradox. The first is that people usually expect too much from marriage; and the second is that often people mistake infatuation for love, and this later leads to broken marriages."

Ludmila Kondakova was divorced from her husband. What is life like in a one-parent family?

The Mother's Profession

One Saturday in spring Ludmila phoned me and invited me to her house. She and her twelve-year-old twins, Alexander and Mikhail, live in Kolomenskoye, a new residential district in Moscow. They have a four-room apartment in a high-rise building. The flat was provided free of charge by the Likhachev Automobile Plant where Ludmila works. The boys are in the 5th grade. During my visit they were at school.

Ludmila, a frank, energetic woman just past thirty, told me her story.

Her parents were workers at the Automobile Plant. After graduating from secondary school, Ludmila went to work as a salesgirl but soon realised that she wanted to get a college education. She

began taking night classes at the Plekhanov Institute of Economics. After graduating, she got a job at the Likhachev Automobile Plant as an economist. She is now head economist of the Planning Department.

Is such a profession typical for a Soviet woman?

According to statistics, 86 per cent of all Soviet economists and planners in industry are women.

"Do you like your work?" I asked.

"Yes, I do. It calls for analysing facts and figures, and planning ahead. You can't be conservative in a job like this. I work with computers, the whole world relies on them. We economists are all for technological progress and try our best to introduce new methods and ideas."

"What do your duties include?"

"I am the economist in charge of three shops: the foundry, the forge and the pressing shop. I spend a lot of time in the shops, speaking to workers and managers and studying the various aspects of production. When an invention is submitted to our office, I analyse it to see whether it will improve working conditions, raise labour efficiency, or increase profits. I make modifications, and offer suggestions. I do a good job, and I am respected at work."

"What about things at home?"

"Everything was different at home..."

Sharing Duties

"My husband never shared my interests and did not consider it necessary to help me at home. He was a driver and would come home feeling tired, but it was not easy on me either. I worked at the plant, the boys were small and there was so much to do at home. There was no equality in our family.

That's why we stopped understanding each other. It's what's called being lonely together."

Unfortunately, this is a common situation. Sociologists note that an unequal distribution of family duties has a deteriorating effect upon a marriage: 61 per cent of all women divorce their husbands on the grounds that the latter have "fallen behind the times".

The situation is quite the opposite in families where both husband and wife share equally in doing the household chores. There are 10 times as many happy families in this category. And this is only logical: the patriarchal family is being replaced by the family where both husband and wife have equal rights and responsibilities.

However, when a critical situation arises, divorce is not the only possible solution. Soviet society does not forbid divorce, but it does not encourage it either. It is the duty of the court to attempt to reconcile the two parties. When Ludmila filed for divorce, the case was postponed for six months so that she could once again weigh all the pros and cons. It was only after she applied a second time, six months later, indicating that there was no hope of preserving the marriage, that she was granted a divorce.

The words "the family enjoys the protection of the state", written into the Soviet Constitution, apply to the one-parent family, as well. In fact, it enjoys more help and privileges than the two-parent family.

Privileges for the One-Parent Family

I was interested in the material privileges granted to a one-parent family. Ludmila provided me with the following information:

The family's monthly income is 300 rubles. This sum consists of her salary, which is 230 rubles, and her alimony, which is 70 rubles, i.e., one-third of her ex-husband's salary. The court decreed that alimony be paid until the two children reach the age of 18.

The average monthly expenditures are as follows: rent - 25 rubles, food - over 150 rubles (Ludmila pays 13 rubles a month - half the actual cost - for 2 meals a day at school for the boys); clothes and recreation - close to 100 rubles.

However, as I have already stated, a family's budget is comprised of more than wages. If the free services and privileges, or those granted at a reduced cost to every Soviet family, were translated into rubles, they would comprise a considerable addition to the family budget. Furthermore, the one-parent family enjoys these extra privileges:

"When one of the boys gets sick," Ludmila said, "he has to stay in bed and be cared for. I call Dr. Barysheva, our district pediatrician. She examines him and gives me a 10 day sick leave at full pay to care for the child. Three days more than for a two-parent family.

"When summer comes the children spend it at 'Vostok', the Plant's Young Pioneer camp. The actual cost of each child's stay in camp is 100 rubles a month. However, I paid 37 rubles instead of 400: two passes were free of charge and two were greatly discounted. This is all I have been paying for them every summer for the past five years.

The Twins

Then I met the boys, fair-haired Misha and dark-haired Alexander. Ludmila said that they were complete opposites in character.

“How did you manage to bring them up alone?” I asked.

“Starting from the age of two they attended my plant’s nursery school. When they were three, they began going to kindergarten.”

Ludmila believes that in a fatherless family it is especially important for the children to grow up with groups of their peers, to establish relationships with the teachers, and to become accustomed to discipline and a schedule. In kindergarten the boys learned to get along in a group and to be independent. They made their own beds, put their toys away, waited in turn on the tables and helped the girls. They had drawing lessons, learned to model with clay, sing, dance, do exercises and were taught to read and to count. As a result, they were well prepared for school.

This is one of the reasons why children’s establishments have become so popular in the USSR. Over 9 million children attended nursery schools and kindergartens ten years ago, when Misha and Alexander were first enrolled. Today this figure stands at 15 million. The state covers 80 per cent of the actual cost, and mothers of one-parent families are given additional privileges when they send their children to nursery school or kindergarten.

“When the boys started school, they began going to the extended-day group after lessons. I only pay for the meals they have in this group, and not even the full cost at that. They have a hot lunch, play outdoors, do their homework, and are given sports instruction. I don’t worry about them while I’m at work, I know they are being cared for.

“The boys are entering a difficult age, so I try not to lose control over them: I often go to school to speak to the teachers and find out how they are progressing and behaving. I have a good relationship

in their form master, Maria Kositskaya, who is also their math teacher. She often phones me and offers advice. Sometimes I accept it and sometimes I do not. For instance, the teachers are pleased with Alexander. He is a quiet, obedient boy. But this is what worries me about him. I never worry when I hear that Misha is too active and undisciplined. He has a healthy, strong character and always tells the truth. Misha has the dominant role in his relationship with his brother.

"Basically I share the teachers' view of my children. We are trying jointly to bring them up to be good, knowledgeable citizens."

"Do you take the social requirements into consideration in bringing up the boys?"

"Yes, this is a single process. Here I was aided not only by the nursery school, kindergarten and school, but by Anton Makarenko's books. I especially like his words: 'Our pupil, no matter what he becomes, can never be simply a paragon of virtue. It isn't enough to be merely a kind and honest person. First and foremost, he will always be a member of his collective and a member of society, a person who is responsible both for his own deeds and those of his comrades.'

"Alexander, who loves to dance, attends a dancing group at the plant community centre which is led by Yuri Gubkin, Merited Artist of the RSFSR. Misha goes to photography class and a flying model group. Both go to the swimming pool, where they have learned the breast-stroke and the crawl."

Who Helps Around the House?

"We let our 'home robots' do everything they can around the house. I mean the vacuum cleaner, the

washing machine, a large refrigerator and even an electric meat grinder," said Ludmila.

"Do your sons help you?"

"They divided up their chores equally: each is on duty for a week (they tried alternating days, but that caused too much confusion). This includes washing the dishes, peeling vegetables, brewing tea and preparing simple dishes. The one off duty does some of the shopping."

"Who keeps an eye on the boys if you're away in the evenings?"

"My neighbour, Anna Vasilyevna Dogayeva. She's a widow and has no children of her own. The boys call her Granny. When I'm away, she gives them supper and sees that they go to bed on time. She's my most dependable friend and helper.

"If Anna Vasilyevna gets sick, our whole family cares for her. We call the doctor, go to the drug-store for her medicine, get her meals, and keep her company."

Workdays and Weekends

"On weekdays I get up at 7 o'clock, make breakfast and wake up the children. I leave for work at 8. The children leave for school a little later. Work starts at 8.30. At 11 the personnel takes a 15-minute break, and we do calisthenics. Lunch hour is from 12:30 to 1:30. My working day ends at 5 p.m. The boys come home from school at six. We have supper at seven, then they do their homework, and I check it. The boys go to bed at 9:30. Then I cook for the next day, tidy up the apartment, watch TV or read.

"On Sundays there's no work to be done around the house, because everything has been done the day before. We just relax. We sleep later than usual, go for a walk after breakfast and then all go to the

running pool together. We go out after lunch, sometimes for a walk, sometimes to the movies. After supper I have company, or visit friends, or go to the theatre.

"My friends say I should put my name on file with the Over Thirty Club at the plant's community centre. They have interesting parties for single men and women. I tell them that I certainly will in another five years, when the boys are older."

What Are Your Hobbies?

"I have three hobbies. Knitting (mostly sweaters, hats and scarves for the boys), reading (I like the Russian classics and have a rather nice collection of the works of Pushkin, Turgenev, Lev Tolstoy, Chekhov and Hertzen and borrow books of contemporary foreign authors in Russian translation from the plant's lending library). But travelling is my favourite hobby. I usually go on trips in the summer, when the boys are away at camp."

"Four years ago I was on a boat trip down the Volga from Moscow to Astrakhan, visiting the old towns of Gorky, Yaroslavl and Uglich on the way. I only paid 54 rubles for a 20-day trip. The plant paid the rest."

"One year I travelled North by boat again. This was the Moscow-Leningrad-Petrozavodsk tour. We stopped at Kizhi and Valaam Island and saw the white nights."

"Two years ago the three of us took a trip through the Caucasus. We visited Northern Ossetia (the three subsidised accommodations cost 80 rubles). I took a lot of photographs of the boys against a background of snow-capped mountains."

"Such is our life. I can say that my family is well cared for."

Faina Fursova, a People's Judge

Faina Fursova, a People's Judge of Sovetsky District (Moscow), is one of the country's 3,204 elected people's judges who are women (32.6 per cent of all judges). She is 50 years old and has been a People's Judge for 25 years. I interviewed her in her chambers.

"It is common knowledge that, according to the law, a mother and father have equal rights and obligations towards their children."

"That is right as far as the USSR is concerned. In many West European countries the father is given preference."

"What does Soviet law say when parents file for divorce?"

"The Fundamentals of Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics on Marriage and the Family states: 'A marriage may be dissolved through a divorce upon the application of either or both of the spouses.' I must note that in the sphere of family and marriage relations, Soviet legislation protects the interests of the mother. Thus, the husband cannot file for divorce without consent of his wife if she is pregnant, or if they have a child under one year of age."

"What if the husband leaves the family during this period?"

"In this case he must pay alimony both to the mother and the child. After a divorce is obtained, or after the husband has left his family, he must pay alimony to the children (who are usually left with the mother) until they come of age. The set amount is one-fourth of his earnings for one child, one-third of his earnings for two children, and half of his earnings for three or more children."

"If the former couple wish to divide their property, they can do this themselves, or through court, if they cannot agree on the matter."

"These are the material aspects of a very serious act, divorce. But there are other aspects as well. For instance deciding which of the parents is to have custody of the children. On entering the courtroom I saw the sign on your door. It reads: Judge Funeral. Contested Custody. What can you say about this problem?"

"If there are minors in the family, a divorce may only be granted by a court whose duty it is to help the parents solve the conflict with the least harm to the children."

"And the court is naturally on the side of the mother?"

"Not necessarily. The law protects the child's interests and does not give preference to either parent. The court proceeds from the fact that both the mother and father are equal before the law and is guided only by the interests of the child."

"Furthermore the People's Courts are interested in the parents solving their conflict by mutual consent, without taking the case to court."

"Do you succeed in this?"

"Yes. We manage to convince a considerable number of couples filing for divorce, but of course some prefer to go to court, and that is their right."

"According to Alexander Koni, a famous Russian lawyer, a lawsuit places a judge 'face to face with a living person'. This puts a special responsibility upon us to make correct judgements without applying standard methods of resorting to formal-

"What if a judge makes a mistake?"

"He has no right to make a mistake, for the life and future of a child are at stake."

“What are the most typical conflicts involving children? Or, rather, in what situation does a child usually find himself when his parents are getting divorced?”

“This question is of great social significance and the object of many sociological surveys. I will cite a few cases from my practice.

“The father was a scientist, the mother was an office worker, an educated woman. They had two boys, one ten and the other seven. The elder boy was a child of the wife’s first marriage. She had remarried after her first husband died. Her second was the one who filed for divorce. He was a self-centred person who felt that his bad relationship with his step-son was the reason for the divorce.

“He was positive that his seven-year-old son would be placed in his custody. He offered a number of arguments: he would soon become a doctor of science and would be able to provide very well for the child materially and give him an ‘intellectual environment’. As far as his wife was concerned, she would then have the son by her first marriage all to herself.”

“What was the decision of the court?”

“The court determined that the seven-year-old boy was closely attached to his mother, who was a calm, sensible, cheerful woman. She was a good homemaker, and devoted much of her time and attention to her children and their friends. The teachers of the kindergarten, who were called in as witnesses, said that she had always helped to organise the children’s parties and make the costumes and that all the children liked her.

“The court decided to grant the mother custody of the boy. Naturally, the father would not be denied the right to take part in the child’s upbringing-

However, the father was not satisfied by what he considered an unjust ruling and appealed. Nevertheless, after he remarried three years later, he even stopped visiting his child.

"Thus, time proved that we made the correct decision."

"Do judges and assessors take the opinion of the child into consideration when reviewing such cases?"

"Yes, if the child has reached the age of 10. Here is an example. A husband and wife decided to get divorced, but failed to come to an agreement about their twin boys. They brought them to me and asked me to decide."

"I asked the parents to leave the room and then said to the boys: 'How would you solve the problem?' One of them answered: 'I love Mother and Father. I could stay with either of them, but I can't live without my brother.' Then his brother said: 'It's true, we can't live without each other. But we should stay with Mother, because she's a woman and needs help, and we're grown-up enough to help her.'

"I then asked their parents, who were arguing loudly in the next room, to come in and said: 'Please calm down and listen to what your sons say. You have brought up two fine boys, and I'm sure you must be good people. Think the matter over and decide it yourselves.'

"They left and never returned."

"Are there cases when the father gains custody of the children?"

"Such things happen, but not often. The father is given custody of the child only when this is in the child's best interest."

"It must be very difficult to be responsible for ensuring a child's happiness."

“It isn’t easy. But I wouldn’t change my profession for anything.”

“Why not?”

“Because, I believe that a judge influences the life of society, bringing out the best in a person, establishing justice and fighting evil.”

“Dostoyevsky once said: ‘One has a right to judge only if he has gained this right through suffering.’ What do you think?”

“It’s easily understandable why many judges suffer from heart diseases. We are under a lot of emotional strain in trying to establish the truth. If I award custody to a mother, I worry about whether the child will be happy with his step-father. When the father wins custody, I worry about whether the child’s step-mother will be good to him. I worry about his present and his future.

“Sometimes we learn only several years later if we made the correct decision. A few days ago, as I was waiting for the tram outside the court building, a man approached me and said: ‘Do you remember me? Several years ago you awarded me custody of my son. You trusted me and believed me. I went through so much in those days. Everything is fine now. My son’s grown up. He graduated from a vocational school. I’m very grateful to you.’

“On my way home I thought about that family and the boy who had become a problem child because of his parents’ constant quarrels and lack of understanding. It is more difficult to come to a decision when a problem child is involved. There is evidence to prove that juvenile delinquency is often caused by poor family relations. In such cases a judge must be especially cautious. I often recall the advice of Vasily Sukhomlinsky, an outstanding Soviet pedagogue. He said: ‘The real art of managing an adolescent is giving him a chance to decide

to manage himself, how to improve his character, and how to stand up for himself, overcoming difficulties and enjoying victories. If he is forced to promise to be good or if he is made to give his word of honour, he feels, at best, that all this is false, because he has no idea of how to become good, nor what is required of him in this respect.'

Here is another important observation made by Sukhomlinsky: 'A person whose heart is asleep understands the truth, but it never becomes his conviction... If you want your words to reach an adolescent's mind, try to arouse in him an ability to emotionally evaluate the world.'

"I have yet another task, that of preventing juvenile delinquency."

"So a judge must also be a pedagogue."

"You couldn't be a judge otherwise."

"Tell me about yourself."

"Both my parents were teachers. My father was killed during the war, and my mother brought me up alone. At first, I wanted to be a teacher, too, or an actress, but I later enrolled in the Law Department at Moscow University. As a student I studied pedagogics on my own and was an actress in the University Drama Studio. All three interests played a part in my life."

"That was when you were a student. What about now?"

"I'm a judge during working hours, a teacher at school, and a TV actress as well."

"Really?"

"I conduct an educational programme for adolescents called Fundamentals of State and Law in which I show film clips and comment on them. The speech lessons I had as a student, and my experience in amateur theatricals are of great help to me."

"Twice a week for the past ten years I have been

teaching a similar course at Secondary School No. 531 for eighth-grade pupils. I try to give them lessons of life based on my practice as a judge. I feel that as a judge I can help in the legal education of teenagers, and that this is my duty as a citizen to the younger generation."

"It is a heavy load: the court, school and TV, besides your family. Where do you get the energy for it all?"

"My husband, who is also a lawyer, my sons and I leave the city and go hitch-hiking in the countryside over the weekend. This is how I relax. Sometimes we go to the Conservatory. I enjoy violin and piano recitals. My favourite composers are Beethoven and Schumann. What a joy it is to listen to Händel's *Julius Caesar*, or attend a Moscow Art Theatre performance of Molière's *Tartuffe*.

"We always take our sons along: a person should come to know music and the theatre at an early age."

"Are you pleased with your sons?"

"It is a difficult question. On the whole, they are independent and considerate."

"What are their plans for the future?"

"Petya is 23, has graduated from the Department of Computer Mathematics and Cybernetics at the Moscow University. He is now a post-graduate in the same department. Alexei is 17 and is a senior in secondary school. I am somewhat troubled about him, for he has not yet decided what he wants to be. He is constantly changing his mind, going from biology to literature, to fencing and canoeing. I think this is a result of my not paying enough attention to the boys."

"What do you wish for your sons in the future?"

"Sound, happy families and lasting marriages."

Counselling for Parents

Larisa Alexeyeva is a research worker at the Institute of General Problems of Upbringing of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. She is a psychologist and works in the department which studies the prevention of juvenile delinquency among schoolchildren.

"What can you say about families in which parents take very little interest in their children? It is a known fact that this is one of the causes of juvenile delinquency."

"I would like to note that the system of upbringing established in the USSR is based on a family-society alliance. Its goal is to raise children who are healthy both physically and morally. The results of this upbringing influence society and determine its moral progress to a considerable degree."

"In the majority of Soviet families, the ideals of the parents coincide with those of society. But in those families where the parents are not very concerned with the problems of upbringing and do not discipline their children adequately, the latter have a propensity to become problem children."

"Families in which the relations between husband and wife are unstable are known as problem families. Parents in these families often believe that the child notices only obvious parental conflicts and are unaware of concealed conflicts. They are mistaken. A three-year-old child is quite able to perceive the strained relations between his parents and to feel the lack of warmth."

"Meanwhile, the parents are absorbed in their own problems and conflicts and have neither the time nor the desire to take part in the child's moral and intellectual upbringing. They believe that since

he is fed, clothed and provided with toys and books, he needs nothing more. Thus, the child is left to himself and starts seeking another environment, usually in the street. He comes to know the negative side of life early, becomes self-centred and finds it difficult to distinguish between good and evil."

"Is there a way to avoid such mistakes?"

"First of all, parents' committees in the schools take an active interest in such families. Moreover, in both rural and urban areas, the district executive committees have juvenile commissions that are made up of teachers, workers who are public activists, and militia personnel. Generally a problem teenager is put under the guidance of one of the commission members who tries to become his friend and adviser, thus helping the family to improve an unfavourable situation. In other cases, a teenager may be placed in a boarding school, where he is provided for by the state.

"Much is being done to bring pedagogical knowledge to parents. There are lectures on pedagogics and psychology at enterprises, offices, over the radio and TV, and a network of consultation centres for parents has been set up. One such consultation centre has been organised at our institute. We counsel parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The interest in pedagogical knowledge is tremendous.

"Academician Alexei Bodalev of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences directs the work of these consultation centres on a national scale."

For the Benefit of Women and Children

Society's attitude towards its women and children is justly regarded as a barometer of its humanism. The programme for the economic and social development of the USSR, outlined by the 29th CPSU Congress for the eleventh five-year plan period (1981-1985), is yet another example of the concern the Party and state have for the well-being of the country's mothers, children and families. This programme was voted for by the 1,329 women delegates to the Congress, all active participants in their country's affairs.

This is a notable fact, for the eleventh five-year plan period coincides with the second half of the UN Women's Decade, which is being carried out throughout the world under the banner of a struggle for the equality of women. Although the goals put forth by the United Nations have mostly been reached in the USSR, this does not mean that Soviet women do not have their own problems, which also must be solved. Their problems are of a very different nature than those facing women abroad.

The Decision "On Measures for the Further Increase of Government Aid to Families with Children", was adopted recently by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers.

What new benefits will this decision provide and what problems will it help to solve?

Here is but one of them. There are over 58 million working women in the USSR. Can the double burden of a job plus family duties be eased? What can the government do to balance the two func-

tions: working for the good of society and raising a family?

Propose that women leave their jobs?

However, according to sociological surveys, women do not only work to earn money, but because they place special importance on their being able to contribute to social production and because of the social status and the feeling of professional pride it gives them.

Therefore, the decision calls on the Union Republics Councils of Ministers to carry out broad measures for introducing shorter hours, shorter working weeks, or sliding shifts for working women.

This is in accordance with Article 35 of the Constitution of the USSR, which is devoted not only to women's rights, but which stresses that the working days of mothers of small children shall be gradually reduced.

There is another aspect to the problem of combining a job and family duties: when every family has an opportunity to place its children in nursery schools or kindergartens this both ensures the child's balanced development and is a great help to a working mother. Unfortunately, the demand for places in children's pre-school establishments exceeds the supply, though many millions of Soviet children now attend them.

The decision has outlined measures for eliminating the existing shortage of nursery schools and kindergartens in regions with a high level of female employment. By 1985 the number of children attending pre-school establishments will have increased by 2.5 million.

The number of pedagogical schools which train teachers for pre-school establishments has been growing from year to year.

In keeping with the decision, state expenditures for food supplied to nursery schools and kindergartens will increase by 10 to 15 per cent, while children from families in which the total per capita income is less than 60 rubles a month will attend free of charge.

Important changes have taken place in another sphere of family life: working mothers (with a work record of at least 1 year) and student mothers have been granted partially paid maternity leave until the child is one year old (besides the regular 100 per cent 112-day paid maternity leave). This amounts to an additional 50 rubles a month for mothers residing in Siberia, the northern regions, and the Far East, and 35 rubles a month for mothers residing in other regions. Now women can return to work when the child is 18 months old, instead of when the child reached the age of one year as before. A woman does not receive any payment for the extra six months, but her work record is not interrupted. Thus, laws are being adjusted to meet the interests of families.

Much has been done in yet another aspect. Formerly, when a child fell ill, his mother received only 3 days of paid sick leave of the time she cared for him. In 1973 this period of paid sick leave to care for an ailing child was increased to 7 days, with 10 days for unwed mothers, widows or divorcees.

Today the mother of a sick child receives 14 days of paid sick leave. She receives 50 per cent of her average wage during these extra four to seven days.

Millions of young people enter into marriage annually in the Soviet Union. Since a successful marriage depends greatly upon the couple's living conditions, newly-weds are given preference in receiving state flats and flats in housing co-operatives; they enjoy certain tax privileges, privileges in

receiving state loans, etc. The birth of their first child gives them the right to receive an 8-year interest-free loan of up to 1,500 rubles at either of the couple's place of employment. If, during this period, they have a second child 200 rubles are deducted from the loan, and if a third child is borne, another 300 rubles are deducted.

Thanks to the decision, payments for Young Pioneer summer camps have further decreased, as additional privileges have been introduced. Half of all available accommodations are now free of charge, while parents are only charged 20 per cent of the actual cost for the other half. Ludmila Zemlyannikova, Secretary of the All-Union Central Trade Union Council and member of the Soviet Women's Committee, told me that these new privileges cost the government another 62.7 million rubles annually.

The Soviet Government will spend a total of over 9,000 million rubles during the eleventh five-year-plan period on providing help to families, one of the basic moral values of a socialist society.

Nikolai Tikhonov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, wrote:

"Every society ... creates a system of upbringing and teaching for children in accordance with its ideals. Socialist society has its own system for bringing up a new, harmoniously developed individual, who combines a communist outlook, true morality and physical perfection.

"However, the idea of a well-bred and harmoniously developed individual ... is of a class nature. Our idea of a 'harmoniously developed', 'well-bred' person implies a love for one's socialist Motherland, adherence to communist ideals, humanism, patriotism combined with a deep respect for other peoples, a high cultural level, high moral qualities, an active life, irreconcilability to injustice, and participation in socially-useful labour."¹

The 5 to 7 age group is the most flexible age, when the basis of one's personality is being formed. This is why Soviet pedagogues compare childhood with the planting season in which "not a day must be lost".

What kind of a society can help parents bring up a child as a new, socialist type of individual?

¹ N. A. Tikhonov. *A Happy Future for Children*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1979, p. 12 (in Russian).

A society which combines family upbringing with a system of pre-school education.

It was once believed that bringing up a child was a simple process which implied keeping the child clean and well fed and giving him love. It was thought that raising a child did not call for any special knowledge and could be accomplished by every family, while pre-school establishments only served to separate the child from his family.

But we now know that many families need help in raising their children and that the family and society should work together in this area.

Prof. Nina Aksarina, a researcher in pedagogics, said in an interview:

“The role of the mother and father and their close relationship with the child are of extreme importance in the formation of his personality. The broad system of pre-school establishments in the USSR does not by any means belittle the significant and decisive role accorded to family upbringing, nor does it free the parents from the responsibility of raising their children.

“However, in order to attain still better results, which are in keeping with the present level of pedagogical knowledge, family upbringing is in need of additional guidance.

“Young parents are often unable to ensure the mental development of their children at different stages. Not every family has the necessary conditions for providing for the child’s *all-round* development. This is only natural, because not every woman, on becoming a mother, automatically becomes an experienced teacher. And in order to bring up a child properly, one must have a thorough knowledge of psychology and pedagogics.”

The present era of scientific and technological progress affects young children, too. A child today

must handle more information and cope with more experiences than a child living fifty years ago. New data on children's abilities and potential reveal that the process of upbringing has become a much more difficult one. The school curriculum has also undergone changes: such subjects as math, physics, biology and chemistry are now taught on a much higher level than before. The child should be prepared and guided in such a way as to cancel the risk of a negative effect caused by an accelerated rate of mental development.

These tasks require a profound knowledge of the child's mental capacities and the systematic, correct influence of adults. Maxim Gorky said that one must do more than just love children; one must know how to bring them up. He said that this was a matter of state importance which required talent and experience in life.

The Third Parent

A total of 20 million Soviet children have a third parent: their nursery schools or kindergartens. This parent helps them do their morning exercises, feeds them, takes them out for walks, puts them to bed and teaches them to keep their things tidy, to paint and model, to read, write, sing and dance. Moreover, this parent teaches them to be kind, considerate, and honest. It organises parties for them, and sees that they get health check-ups – and all free of charge, or at a negligible cost.

The Soviet system of pre-school education was set up 60 years ago. Pedagogues, pediatricians, scientists and statesmen all deal with its various problems.

Ministers of education and scholars from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and the

USSR took part in a seminar held in Moscow entitled "Pre-school Education and the Pedagogical and Economic Problems of Its Further Development". This is what Rosa Kurbatova, Head of the USSR Ministry of Education Department of Pre-School Education, told me:

"Pre-school establishments are the first step in the system of public education. Their aim is to provide for the child's all-round development. Today, 15 million children in the USSR attend nursery schools and kindergartens, and 4.8 million attend seasonal children's establishments. The number of available places continues to grow. Providing for one place in a pre-school establishment costs the state 1,500 rubles; it costs over 500 rubles a year to care for one child in a nursery school and 450 rubles in a kindergarten, with four-fifths of the costs provided by the state.

"Naturally, the 229 schools in the country which train nursery school and kindergarten teachers and the 40 departments of pre-school education at pedagogical institutes are subsidised by the state. Apart from general subjects, the students study pedagogics and child psychology, the fundamentals of anatomy, hygiene, physical training, speech development, etc. As a result, over a million teachers in the pre-school establishments have a pedagogical education.

"The child's mind, emotions and willpower must develop simultaneously. This is why his mental, moral, aesthetic and physical education should be closely connected.

"An artistic upbringing is extremely important for the formation of the child's personality. We want to teach children to appreciate all that is beautiful in life and art. They are taught to draw, mould and design and have music and dancing lessons.

"The basis of a healthy body is established in childhood. For this reason children in kindergartens are taught to do calisthenics daily. Serious infectious diseases have practically been eradicated in pre-school establishments.

"The joint efforts of family and kindergarten in bringing up the child produce the best results. Much is required from the parents in this respect. Their duties have been enumerated in the Fundamentals of Legislation on Marriage and the Family.

"People's Universities of pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical consultations for parents and serious discussions and conferences over the radio and television are very popular in the USSR. A total of 16 teachers' newspapers and 46 pedagogical magazines are published in the country. 'Bringing up children is the concern of society and of each of us!' has become a motto in the Soviet Union."

**Is a Person
Born Talented?
Is He Born Cruel
or Kind?**

These are but two of many questions concerning children which need to be correctly answered. Scientists, teachers, parents and all who are involved in pre-school education have a great interest in this matter. The child's future depends upon the answers to these questions and his early upbringing.

Academician Alexander Zaporozhets, of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, said: "The Soviet system of pre-school education is one of the most extensive and elaborate in the world. It rejects the concept that a child's development is predetermined genetically and that only a chosen

few can attain the highest level of creativity. Soviet scientists hold that every child is capable and possesses unlimited potential abilities. The task is to bring out these abilities."

The USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences' Research Institute for Pre-School Education, founded in the 1960s and the only such institute in the world, carries out research and works out complex development programmes for the physical, mental, moral and aesthetic education of preschoolers both in kindergartens and at home.

The Institute's work is based on the theories of such Soviet pedagogues and psychologists as Nadezhda Krupskaya, Anton Makarenko, Lev Vygotsky, Alexander Leontyev and Semyon Rubinstein.

People of various professions—pedagogues, psychologists, doctors, artists and musicians—are on the staff of the institute's 10 laboratories. These specialists study the child's early potential and are seeking methods for revealing and developing this potential. They are striving to create all the necessary conditions for a harmonious upbringing.

All pre-school establishments in the USSR follow a special programme of Upbringing in the Family and Kindergarten worked out by the Institute. The programme is a flexible one and is revised in accordance with the latest practical and scientific data.

Academician Nikolai Amosov, author of the system of early active upbringing, and well-known in the USSR and abroad, wrote: "You cannot make a genius of every infant, but it is probably possible to develop his intellect considerably."

Sofya Yakobson, Candidate of Psychology, heads a team of psychologists at the Laboratory of Infant and Pre-School Psychology at the USSR

Academy of Pedagogical Sciences' Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology.

The team conducted an interesting experiment among the children of Moscow, Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Petropavlovsk (Kazakhstan) and Cuba. The objective was to discover whether a person is born mean or kind, or whether he develops one or the other characteristic under the influence of his environment. If the latter were to be proved true, they were to seek effective ways of guiding the child's moral development.

A group of 90 children between the ages of 6 and 7 took part in the experiment. They were given toys and told to distribute among themselves.

Most of the children distributed the toys equally; some left themselves less than one-third; but 20 children kept most of the toys for themselves day after day, thus depriving the other children of their share of the toys.

These children comprised almost one-fourth of the group and attracted the attention of the psychologists. Two wooden dolls were set in front of the children of this group. One doll "distributed" coloured circles and squares equally, as had the children who had acted conscientiously. The other doll took more than its share to the detriment of others. The children had to pick the doll they liked best.

Ten children said that the first doll was better, because it distributed the toys equally. When they were asked: "Would you like to be like this doll?" they replied "Yes, of course." But in the next series of experiments they again acted as selfishly as the second doll. Is this paradoxical?

My colleague Irina Pruss, who often observed the work of this particular team of psychologists noted: "The children were well aware of what was

right. This means there is a great difference between a child's moral and intellectual development."

This is true, but the problem is how to influence the child so that he will not only know what is right, but will act accordingly. Sofya Yakobson said: "The problem is to find a way to reach the child's soul."

In another series of experiments one doll (the symbol of justice and kindness) was named Pinocchio; the other (the symbol of meanness and greed) was named Fire-Eater. All the children knew the story of Pinocchio and regarded the characters as real people.

Nevertheless, the children continued to behave as before. They admired Pinocchio's kindness, but continued to act like the loathsome Fire-Eater. The experiments seemed to have reached an impasse. Could the children be helped after all?

Before starting the next experiment, Sofya Yakobson went over to one of the boys and told him offhandedly that the other children thought he was like Pinocchio, not like the Fire-Eater. This resulted in a change in the boy's behaviour.

When the other children of this group who had behaved like the Fire-Eater learned that their mothers and the other children all regarded them as Pinocchio, the situation changed: they began to view themselves critically and could say with some difficulty and inner struggle: "Today I behaved like the Fire-Eater. But tomorrow everything will be different."

During the following experiments the children shared their toys equally and even gave away more than they kept.

But were these merely impulsive acts?

Days, months and, at last, half a year went by.

but the children did not revert to their former behaviour.

I was impressed by the work of the psychologists who had changed the behaviour of twenty children for the better. This is indeed a flexible age.

When Irina Pruss and I discussed this experiment, she said:

"The evil which brings pleasure can only be opposed by the good which fills the child with emotion.

"The researchers came to the following conclusion: The child must evaluate his own actions; there is no way of avoiding one's own judgement. However, this can only become a basis for improvement and moral development if the child knows he is loved and that others have faith in him. This means that there exists a certain socio-psychological mechanism which forms, from one generation to the next, a highly moral people. A person is not born kind or mean."

An Alliance of Science and Practice

The Laboratory for the Upbringing of Young Children at the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences' Research Institute for Pre-School Education is housed in the right wing of a long, light-brick building surrounded by a shady garden. Nursery School-Kindergarten No. 406 of Oktyabrsky District (Moscow), which is the Institute's experimental group, occupies the left wing.

Prof. Alexander Fonaryov has been head of the laboratory for 12 years. During World War II he was a tankman in the army and was seriously wounded at the Battle of Kursk. After the war he

graduated from the Philosophy Department at Moscow State University. The young philosopher was interested in everything that concerned child development and undertook a thorough study of pedagogics, psychology and physiology. He became interested in the problem of primary motivation, and the evolution of the individual. Prof. Fonaryov has written several books, one of which, *The Child and the Environment*, has been translated into many languages.

Prof. Fonaryov's three children, Irina, Polina and Grigory, are all teachers. "I don't know what profession my granddaughter Olga will choose, as she is only a few months old now," he said.

He showed me around the laboratory. "This is our control room. We have video recorders, computers and many other aids. The playroom has a window into the lab.

"We wanted to know all about the small child: what his emotions were, and which of them were dominant, the negative or the positive; what he knows about the world and what his attitude towards possessions is. A year-old child has a personality of his own.

"Games in which the child acts and various real situations serve as the basis of his mental development, for the child is an observer and a creator. There is a difference between being guided by an adult who says: 'Turn the handle' and trying himself to do so. Of course, the child needs a certain amount of guidance, but he must be the one to solve the problem in the end. He suddenly discovers that a toy has a light that can be turned on, or that the door of the doll-house opens. This provides great impetus, as it gives rise to a positive emotion – the result of mastering a practical task, and this aids his further development.

“Sometimes we see toys that are beautifully designed but of very little educational value to the child. So our laboratory designs new toys jointly with the All-Union Toy Research Institute headed by Vasily Pryakhin, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences. This is very important, for the idea for a toy must originate with a pedagogue, while the artist and designer package it. A toy is a serious object.”

“What other aspects of your work can you name?”

“Our laboratory studies the origins of the child’s physical and mental development and his potential qualities and rate of development, depending on the type of upbringing he receives. Our chief objective is to work out methods for preparing the child for school. This is why we are so interested in the development of his intellect and in methods by which a young child can be taught to count, to make up and solve simple arithmetical problems, to read and write, and above all, to do all this with pleasure. The problem is to teach pre-schoolers serious subjects through play.

“We try to evoke positive emotions by making the child solve practical tasks as an equal, together with his adult mentor. We believe that moral upbringing is extremely important, and that it affects the child’s mental development. And, of course, we deal with the child’s physical training and health.”

“What are the practical results?”

“Our laboratory has drawn up a Programme of Upbringing and Training of Young Children which is part of the Programme of Upbringing in the Family and Kindergarten. This is our practical aid to the teachers of pre-school establishments.

"I would like to note that Soviet pedagogues believe that a child's individual traits and abilities develop to a greater extent when he is surrounded by children of his own age. We firmly believe that every child being brought up in a collective should be viewed as an individual. Any levelling of the personality is out of the question."

"How do scientists help kindergartens prepare children for school?"

"A special Programme for Kindergarten Preparatory Groups has been jointly worked out by our Institute's laboratories of moral, mental, physical and aesthetic upbringing, as well as by the laboratories of speech development and psychological development. This programme is also based on the results of research carried out by other establishments: the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences' Institute of Pediatrics, and the Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology.

"If you want to see for yourself how these recommendations are put into practice, look into the other wing of this building."

The following is a conversation I had with Yelena Samsonova, the director of Nursery School-Kindergarten No. 406. She has been a kindergarten teacher for thirty years.

"We have 280 children in all. They are divided into 11 groups: toddlers and junior, intermediary and senior groups. We have a staff of 50: 22 teachers, 14 nursemaids, 3 cooks, 2 music teachers and a doctor."

"Who are the children's parents?"

"They have various occupations: an excavator-driver, a tailor, research workers, engineers, etc."

"Of what nationalities are the children?"

"Russians, Tatars, Jews, Armenians and Georgians."

“What do you think of the Programme worked out by the scientists and recommended for use in pre-school establishments?”

“According to this Programme, a child’s upbringing is accomplished in the process of practical activity: games, fulfilling practical tasks, attending lessons and becoming acquainted with various events of social life understandable to them.

“We are concerned about the children’s health and all-round development. We try to see that they are in good spirits and make each day here an interesting and happy one.”

“Which of the teachers do you think the children like best?”

“Tamara Malysheva, the teacher of the senior preparatory group. She has a specialised pedagogical education and is just over 50. She is a cheerful woman who loves and respects every child.”

“What did the children do today, for instance?”

“Depending on their age, they drew, modelled in clay, had a foreign language lesson, or a music lesson. They also trimmed the bushes in the garden and watered flowers.”

“What did the children of your previous groups grow up to be?”

“There are so many professions I can’t even enumerate them. Svetlana Kosorukova – that is a photograph of her on the wall, she was six then, and was dancing – is now a ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre.

“Some people think that working in a kindergarten is easy: all you have to do is look after children and see that they have their meals on time. But our task is much broader: we want to bring up worthy citizens. We try to get the children to do things for themselves and encourage them to be kind. We rely on their parents to help us in this.”

Nina Zubova, a kindergarten music teacher and graduate of the Conservatory, said:

“We teach the children to listen to and appreciate music, to sing and dance.

“But mostly we strive to develop in the child a feeling of perception. A child who responds to music is capable of understanding other people, their joys and sorrows. I play soft melodious music for the toddlers and pieces by Schubert, Tchaikovsky and Glinka for the older children.

“For instance, I will play Tchaikovsky’s *The Sick Doll*. Then I tell them that he wrote another piece for another doll and play it for them. This second piece is joyful and the children react to it by saying: ‘The doll got well,’ and ‘Maybe that’s another doll.’

“Then I play Glinka’s *The Children’s Polka* and ask them how many parts it consists of. They answer correctly: ‘Three parts.’ I ask them whether all three parts are the same. They reply that the first and third are alike, but that the second is different. Then they dance to show me the different moods and tempo. Dmitry Kabalevsky, the well-known Soviet composer, said: ‘The beautiful engenders the good.’”

How do People Become Internationalists?

Let us visit some kindergartens in the two Union Republics of Armenia and Kazakhstan to see how children are brought up there.

Veronika Gevorkian, the director of Kindergarten No. 159 in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, delivered a detailed report on the work of the kindergarten at a board meeting of the USSR Ministry of Education. As I listened to her report, I thought

how important it was to have a creative approach to one's work, to be able to look ahead to the future and accustom children to simple tasks through play.

The Armenian Ministry of Education has approved the kindergarten's teaching methods. *Soviet Woman* magazine devoted a centrefold to this kindergarten. Following are some of its daily activities:

There is a small garden on the kindergarten grounds. In spring, before the children of the intermediary group plant the vegetable rows, the children of the senior group make little poles to mark the rows in the carpentry shop. On each of the poles they trace the outline of the vegetable that will be planted in the row. All summer long they care for the garden and water the plants. When they harvest their crop they wash the vegetables and take them to the kitchen, where a big salad is prepared for them.

There is also a small wheat field. In autumn, when it is time to harvest the wheat, all the children go to the field and pick every single ear. Then they separate and sort the grain. The larger grains are left for future sowing and the smaller ones are taken to the near-by mill. The children return to the kindergarten with a small bag of fresh flour from which the cook bakes them a loaf of bread. Each child gets a slice of fresh bread which he takes home to his parents. Thus, the children are taught to respect their own work and the work of others...

As I step off the plane in Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, I see the beautiful peaks of the Alatau Mountains. The city is known for its apple orchards. Everywhere one hears the sound of water flowing in irrigation ditches.

Together with M. Akhmetova, Deputy Minister

of Education of Kazakhstan, I visited the six nursery school-kindergartens of the Alma Ata Textile Mill. 1,500 children attend these pre-school institutions.

I was impressed by the large number of children of different nationalities. An Uzbek boy in an embroidered skull-cap and a Latvian girl were playing with an erector set, an olive-skinned Kazakh girl and a fair-haired Russian boy were drawing a picture of the globe encircled by children of all races holding balloons. The teacher wrote a caption for the poster. It read:

*Let us give the world to our children
As we would give them a large apple,
As we would give them a warm bun,
Let them eat their fill of it, if only for a day.*

“Nazym Khikmet, a Turkish poet wrote this. Let us learn the poem by heart,” she said to the children.

“There are children of so many nationalities here. What language will they be taught when they go to school?” I asked Akhmetova.

“It is our policy to educate a child in his native language. That is why in our republic children are taught in so many languages from Kazakh to Korean.

“Kazakhstan is known as the centre of people’s friendship. Over 700,000 children representing nearly 100 nationalities (Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Byelorussians, Koreans, Uzbeks and Letts among others) attend the republic’s nursery schools and kindergartens. Here they receive their first lessons of friendship.”

We all remember the late Shaakhmed Shamakhmudov, the blacksmith from Tashkent, and his wife Bakhri, who is now 82. This couple adopted 14 children of different nationalities. It is in this same

spirit of mutual respect and friendship that children of different nationalities are now being brought up in Alma Ata. I was greatly impressed by the wonderful idea of brotherhood and once again realised how people became internationalists.

Fanny Edelman, Vice-President of the WIDF and one of the leaders of the Women's Union of Argentina, visited Alma Ata and later told me:

"We visited one of the kindergartens of the Textile Mill and saw the children's happy faces. This is what we are fighting for: for all children of the world to be brought up in an atmosphere of fraternity, so that they will be able to develop normally under peaceful conditions."

This same precept can be found in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Principle 10 reads, in part: "The child shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood."

A Discussion in Parliament

I am reporting from the Kremlin where a joint meeting of the committees on women's working and living conditions and mother and child protection of the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR is in session.

The question being discussed is the programme for building more nursery schools and kindergartens in some of the republics. This is a question of concern to teachers and parents, as well as to the heads of enterprises and members of government.

I must note that all the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and, especially its legislative proposals, industrial and housing con-

struction, education, health protection, social security and youth committees are dealing with the working and living conditions of women and mother and child protection.

The two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, being concerned with the role of women at work and in bringing up the younger generation, each formed a special commission in October 1976: on women's working and living conditions and on mother and child protection. Each commission consists of 35 elected deputies.

The committees, which have the power to initiate legislation, are headed by Zoya Pukhova, Hero of Socialist Labour, Chairman of the Commission of the Soviet of the Union and Director of the Ivanovo Textile Mill, and Lidiya Lykova, Chairman of the Commission of the Soviet of Nationalities and Vice-Chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers.

There are familiar faces among the members of the commissions in the auditorium: Zlikha Kulbekova, a pediatrician and head of the children's department of the Kustanai Regional Hospital (Kazakhstan), Bagrat Shinkuba, a poet from Abkhaziya, and Zoya Samolyotova, a sewing-machine operator from Leningrad.

These two standing committees may call upon a wide range of ministries, departments and representatives of public organisations for a discussion of any pressing problem. The speaker today is Mikhail Prokofyev, Minister of Education of the USSR and Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences:

"The Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that children should be happy. This has become a reality in the Soviet Union, because the state has in many respects taken upon itself the bur-

ten of caring for the children's health and upbringing. Nursery schools and kindergartens play an important role in the system of upbringing in the USSR. The demand for places is growing each year, as can be seen from the following figures: 1.7 million children attended pre-school establishments in 1950, 4.4 million in 1960, 9.2 million in 1970, and 15 million children are presently enrolled. This rapid growth of the number of children attending nursery schools and kindergartens is typical of every Union Republic. In the Ukraine, for example, 251,000 children were attending pre-school establishments in 1950, while today the figure is 2.4 million. The corresponding figures for Moldavia are 7,000 and 256,000; for Lithuania, 8,000 and 152,000.

"The number of nursery schools and kindergartens in rural regions was at one time considerably less than that in urban areas. Today, the situation has changed: almost every collective or state farm in the country's many republics and regions has its own pre-school establishments. Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of these establishments."

The fact that the question of building children's establishments is being discussed at the level of standing committees of the Supreme Soviet is proof of the importance attached to this issue in the USSR.

The commissions adopted a decision which includes recommendations to the ministries and departments responsible for slowing construction.

Dr. Benjamin Spock, the world-famous pediatrician and public activist, said he could easily believe that bringing up children in the USSR was the concern of the entire country and of every citizen. It was not an abstract idea, but an idea that was being concretely expressed by the people.

According to an old proverb, the process of bringing up a child begins 200 years before he is born. Seven years after he is born he goes to school, which amounts to 207 years in all, for the two processes, upbringing and learning, are inseparable. However that may be, all mothers who see their children off to school for the first time experience a similar feeling: "It seems that only yesterday he was a baby, and here I am taking him to school. He has entered a new phase of life."

Indeed, going to school (during the 11th five-year-plan period, children in the USSR will start school at 6 years of age) is a turning-point in the general process of a child's development. This is why teachers address parents through the press long before the 1st of September, instructing them as to how to prepare their child for school. Children who attend kindergarten learn many things, but they still need help from their families to prepare for school. And this is especially true in families where the children never attended kindergarten.

Some children are better prepared than others for school. But in the USSR, they are all guaranteed an education regardless of sex, nationality, race or social origin.

For over 65 years the classrooms of the multinational Soviet state have been filled with boys and

children of different nationalities, with the children of peasants, workers and intellectuals, all of whom are taught a single curriculum. A difficult social problem was solved when the transition to compulsory secondary education was completed. This means that every child entering school must complete the three-year secondary school course. This will make it possible for him, if he so desires, to enroll in any higher educational establishment. After graduation, he will be guaranteed a job in his field. University secondary education is both a requirement of a modern industrial society and a mighty lever in raising the people's cultural level.

The educational system in the capitalist world is quite different. In the USA (where 30 million adults cannot read and another 30 million are only marginally literate) schoolchildren are divided into two categories according to their I. Q. scores. In reality, however, they are separated according to their property status, social standing and race. If a child is white and wealthy the road to knowledge is open to him... if he is non-white and poor, a higher education is practically unattainable.

A Soviet child does not know the meaning of corporal punishment, as do the schoolchildren of the FRG and the USA. *Burn the Schools - Save the Children*, a book by David Melton, deals with this problem.

The children of the world need schools in which there is no discrimination or brutality. Principle 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child reads:

"The child is entitled to receive education which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral

and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.”

Let us compare this with Article 45 of the Constitution of the USSR:

“Citizens of the USSR have the right to education.

“This right is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialised secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production; by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses; by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students; by the free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education.”

Let us now examine the Soviet school system, its problems and achievements.

What Is New in the Soviet School System?

The USSR’s 44.3 million schoolchildren attend 145,000 schools in which they are taught in 54 languages of the peoples of the USSR. These schools are staffed by 3 million teachers. There are 200 pedagogical institutes, 11 state universities and over 400 specialised secondary pedagogical schools in the country.

How much does the state spend on one pupil?

Nearly 200 rubles annually on each pupil in a school of general education, 700 rubles on each

pupil in a specialised secondary school, and over 1,000 rubles on each student enrolled in an institute or university.

Like a sculptor, the school moulds and creates a personality, develops the pupil's intellect and emotions, makes him physically strong, teaches him to work, brings him up as a good citizen.

Mikhail Prokofyev, Minister of Education of the USSR, said: "We can hardly overestimate the role of the system of public education in the process of bringing up the country's future citizens. Here, they are taught the laws of nature and social development from a dialectical-materialist point of view: they learn the fundamentals of science and culture, and acquire a Marxist-Leninist outlook."

In this chapter we shall look at some of the latest achievements of the Soviet school system.

How to Ease the Burden of Over-Study?

In this busy age of the scientific and technological revolution, the individual is overwhelmed by a constantly increasing flow of information. Dr. Levon Badalian, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and a well-known neurologist, believes that too much incoming information is as harmful to an individual as pollution is to the biosphere and that children are the first victims of this danger.

Dr. Badalian has studied the specific characteristics of a child's brain and the influence of the environment upon it. He has come to the conclusion that the attempts of some teachers to accelerate the educational process run counter to natural processes and cannot be regarded as harmless from the medical point of view.

Soviet sociologists are of the same opinion: the working day of a schoolchild, especially the older pupil, has become unbearably long.

How can this burden of over-study be eased without affecting the quality of teaching?

The Soviet school system has found a way out: improved curricula have been introduced in all the country's schools. This is the result of the joint efforts of special commissions formed by the USSR Ministry of Education and the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. The commissions are made up of researchers in various fields of sciences, school teachers, psychologists and doctors. The programmes were first tested in experimental schools where they were approved both by the teachers and by the pupils.

Three basic changes have been introduced into the school system. First, classes are more vocationally oriented. This gives the pupils the opportunity to prepare for their future professions and study more effectively. Second, subjects no longer "overlap", i. e., there is no duplication of subject matter being taught. Third, and most important, much of the extremely complicated and non-essential material has been considerably reduced. Correspondingly, the fundamentals of every subject in every grade are now accentuated.

Specialists believe that the introduction of improved curricula and the increased use of new audio-visual aids will advance the schools to a qualitatively new stage. The process of transferring the system of secondary education to this new stage will take place during the 1980s.

Free Textbooks

According to a special decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers (January 1978), the country's primary and secondary schools began issuing free textbooks to the pupils.

This was no easy task, for, as has already been noted, subjects are taught in 54 languages in the USSR. Textbooks are printed by the national publishing houses of all the 15 Union and 20 Autonomous republics. The number of copies printed varies: from printings in the millions in the RSFSR to printings of 1,000 copies for the Eskimo schools.

The transition to free textbooks began in 1978 when pupils in the 1st grade received their first free textbook (30 million copies of 150 books). In 1979 pupils from the first to third grades were issued free textbooks (62.4 million copies of 372 books).

In 1981 the USSR Central Statistical Board announced that as of September 1, 1981 pupils from the 4th through 7th grades were also to receive free textbooks. Today pupils of all grades enjoy this privilege.

Starting School at the Age of Six

Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1981-1985 and for the Period Ending in 1990 states that conditions should be created "for a gradual changeover to starting children's tuition in preparatory forms of general educational schools at the age of six".

When I visited the Ministry of Education, I asked whether the kindergarten preparatory groups would still function. I was told that they would con-

tinue as before for the next few years along with preparatory classes in schools. I then asked why such a changeover is being introduced in the first place and received an interesting reply.

Not all children are equally prepared to start school. Those children who attend kindergarten are usually better prepared than those who have not. Though some children who did not attend kindergarten can sometimes read and count better, but they feel insecure in a group, have a short span of attention and are not accustomed to a schedule or to sports. The most unhappy children are those who are brought up at home without much attention from the family. They immediately fall behind the other children, even though they might be quite clever and intelligent.

Nelly Yermolayeva, Deputy Head of the USSR Ministry of Education's Department of Schools. said: "Preparatory classes will help all children get an equal start in the first grade. Our teaching programme in these classes will be different than that in the first grade. We shall utilise the experience of kindergartens, where children are taught through play. At the same time, this will give primary school pupils two free days a week, as a part of their curricula will be taught in the preparatory classes."

The following information comes from the Teachers' Advanced Training Institute in Gomel, Byelorussia:

A total of 7,000 six-year-olds attended preparatory classes in the Gomel Region. The most well-lit and spacious classrooms were set aside for the youngsters to play and study. On one side of the room, there are small desks and chairs, on the other, toys are spread out on a bright carpet. The adjacent room is furnished with cots for an after-

noon nap. The children get three meals a day in the school cafeteria.

In the morning the children have four 45-minute lessons, each of which is interrupted by three-minute rest breaks and five-minute breaks for calisthenics. The children are taught to read in their native language, learn a little math and geography, and enjoy the arts and crafts, singing, dancing and listening to music.

There are no home assignments and the children get no marks for their work, but a child who works well has a small red flag or star placed on his desk. Children who fall behind are helped and encouraged.

The afternoon hours are spent much like they are in kindergarten. The teacher is replaced by another teacher who puts the children to bed for their nap, then takes them out to play and organises games and sports.

Today over 800,000 six-year-olds attend preparatory classes throughout the country on an experimental basis.

This is what Prof. Sh. Amonashvili, Doctor of Psychology, said: "I believe the difficulty of managing six-year-olds lies in the fact that they are too 'educated', on the one hand, and, on the other, they are still at an age when they are discovering the world through play. It is difficult for them to understand our orders, our restrictions and our talk about a pupil's duties.

"Do not be misled by the small difference of a year or less between a preparatory grade pupil and a first-grade pupil, for it is not really so small. In fact, children of six and seven years of age differ greatly both psychologically and physiologically."

The Teacher's Mark

When a teacher enters the classroom, he comes face to face with the children. This is a crucial moment. One young teacher confessed that she feels faint, and an old teacher and war veteran told me that his heart begins to pound when he enters a classroom. So, even with the best textbooks teaching is still a difficult art.

We shall select but a few voices from the many-voiced chorus of teachers, parents, writers and students.

Daniil Granin, a writer:

"When a teacher marks a pupil's work, it is also as though the pupil were marking the teacher's work, and this should be remembered. It is impossible for every teacher to be a paragon of justice and high principles. He is, after all, only human. But he can and should be loved by the children he teaches. This is essential."

Alexei Leontyev, a psychologist and Lenin Prize Winner: "There has been a significant changeover from cramming pupils with information to the use of visual aids in the schools. It is wrong to think that learning by rote develops the child's memory. In fact, it simply results in more elaborate methods of memorising. The memory is exhausted in the process and loses its youthful flexibility, and it is so important to preserve this for as long as possible!"

Iosif Borukhov, the principal of Secondary School No. 524 (Moscow): "A teacher's level of spiritual development and his experience in life, both of which are reflected in his general behaviour and in every thing he does, are of paramount importance."

Let us now look into the faces of the pupils. What must be done to keep the children interested

in their studies, to help them enjoy learning without fear of getting a poor mark?

"Can we look forward to a time when all children will wake up in the morning feeling happy at the thought of soon being on their way to school and of not feeling like leaving after the lessons are over?" asked Zaghid Shoyubov of Azerbaijan, People's Teacher of the USSR. Yes, if we judge by the happy and knowledgeable children Shoyubov teaches.

According to the tenets of Soviet pedagogics, both the mental and moral development of the child depend, to a great extent, upon the teacher's faith in the pupil. I think the child's development depends on a teacher's faith in his own abilities and in his personal initiative to create new forms and methods of teaching. There are teachers in every Union Republic who have evolved their own progressive methods of teaching and have put them into practice.

N. Guzik, a chemistry teacher from the Ukraine, trains his pupils to work on their own. His methods have become well known, as have the methods of N. Shishkin, a physics teacher from Azerbaijan, who not only provides his pupils with a thorough knowledge of the subject but also arouses their interest in experimental work. S. Lysenkova, a teacher from Moscow, has worked out a new teaching method for primary school, and Y. Ilyin (Leningrad) has achieved excellent results by staging dramatic situations in his literature classes.

Victor Shatalov (Donetsk) has been a math teacher for 20 years. He relies on the 200 methods of teaching he has worked out to turning each lesson into a mutual learning experience.

Here is a typical situation. On September 1 Shatalov began the new term in what was considered to be a weak class. He conducted the lesson in such a

way that every pupil soon became interested.

Shatalov begins by explaining the new theoretical material. He draws a summary diagram on the blackboard and writes the legend in coloured chalk. This takes from 10 to 12 minutes. Then he repeats the information, but in a more concise form (four minutes). Finally he provides a summary in which he emphasises the main points (two minutes). He considers this three-way method of presenting new material essential to teaching.

The pupils bring their own black-and-white summary diagrams, which were handed out at the previous lesson, to their next class. They have already marked the legend in coloured pencils at home. Shatalov spends five minutes checking their assignments. He does not mark their work, but places the notebooks in three stacks according to whether the work is excellent, good or satisfactory. At this stage he is not only a math teacher, but also a psychologist who is aware of every boy and girl's desire to be among the best. There are no victors and no failures, no good or bad students. One can actually feel the relationship of optimism and good-will that exists between the teacher and the pupils. Shatalov's pupils complete the curricula twice as fast as those in other classes of the same grade. The result? Here is an example: 33 graduates of his formerly "weak" class went on to college, and 17 are now straight A students receiving increased grants. This method is an art in itself and is now being used by 700 teachers in 300 cities of the Soviet Union. Victor Shatalov believes that any teacher who has a creative approach to his work and who loves children can master this method.

The Metamorphosis of a Witch

For twenty of her thirty-seven years as a primary school teacher, Sofya Lysenkova of Moscow considered herself a witch and her work as heavy burden. This is how she describes her first twenty years: "I used to stay after school to coach poor pupils, even though I knew I wasn't really helping them. The children were tired after a day at school and these additional lessons were exhausting. They couldn't wait for the lesson to end and certainly thought me a witch to keep them in after school. But I really wanted to help slow learners and began to do some research on the problem which resulted in a new system of teaching. I have been able to prove that all children can study easily and with pleasure. For the past 17 years my work has been a joy.

"I share my experience whenever possible. I have visited schools in 20 cities, from Sevastopol in the Crimea to Ulhan-Ude in Buryatia near Lake Baikal. I have been invited to Grozny, Rostov-on-Don and Odessa, and will visit these cities during my summer vacation.

"I have conducted 600 open classes for teachers from all over the country who specially come to my school to learn my method. Some of our lessons were filmed, but the children and I continued to work as if nothing were unusual."

This is what Sofya Lysenkova, Merited Teacher of the RSFSR, told me about her work at Moscow's Secondary School No. 587. She was in the school cafeteria having lunch with her seven-year-old pupils.

When lunch was over and they all got up, a boy and girl, the two children standing nearest to her,

each took one of her hands. The gesture seemed so natural to them. They went through the noisy corridors of the school, the teacher holding two children by their hands and surrounded by her other 40 pupils.

The lunch break was over. I entered the classroom and saw three signs. One of them read: "Learn to study!"; the second read: "Oktyabryonok¹ likes to work"; and the third read: "An Oktyabryonok is truthful, brave and skilful." I took a seat in the last row next to Yura Borisov. The lesson began.

The teacher's manner was calm and business-like. She said: "Alyosha Maiorov will lead the class."

Lysenkova does not reproach her pupils. She told me: "I don't believe in criticising children the way many teachers do. I never say, 'What are you looking at? Why aren't you writing?'. Precious time is wasted and the lesson is interrupted. The child is ashamed enough of falling behind. There never should be an atmosphere of conflict between the teacher and the pupil. The children's health, spirit and ability to concentrate are the most important factors in my estimation. Our work in class must evoke a positive response."

...The teacher "did not notice" a boy turn to his neighbour to ask him something—it was probably an important question. She "did not see" that a very small girl was looking out the window—she must have been tired and needed a break. A moment later the girl was again listening attentively without having to be reminded. The teacher does

¹ Oktyabryonok—a child of seven years or upward preparing to be a Young Pioneer.—*Tr.*

not react, because she knows that in a moment or two the children will be drawn into the rhythm of the lesson again.

But I did hear her saying: "Don't bend over your notebooks. Raise your heads!" "Good for Katya, she's been listening attentively."

I felt the teacher's respect for her pupils and the natural link between her teaching methods and methods of upbringing.

I would like to say a few words about her method. The problem that interested Lysenkova was: at what stage of a lesson devoted to new material do poor or even average pupils begin to lose interest and fall behind? When a teacher begins to explain a lesson using bright objects, pictures and charts, the children are active, reply to the questions and reach correct solutions. Sofya Lysenkova found that children start to have difficulties during the transition from an explanation based on bright, easily understood visual aids to more complex material, when they must rely on their own resources and recall rules they have already learned. Some children are incapable of doing this. They can neither understand the material the first time it is explained, nor learn it quickly enough later on. This is the reason for their passivity.

Lysenkova tries to get each pupil to actively participate in every lesson and to help him acquire a sound knowledge of the given subject. Her teaching method is based on a presentation approach. She uses charts, cards, diagrams and pictures to explain the lesson. Every rule of Russian grammar and every type of math problem is visually presented.

In order to understand how Lysenkova teaches a child, one must become immersed not only in the atmosphere of the lesson, but in the problem under discussion as well. The pupils are first shown a

graphic explanation of a rule. It remains on display during the next lessons devoted to the same rule and until the pupils have completely mastered it. As a result, the children do not feel lost, for the rule is there before their eyes. They are relieved of the anxiety of replying to a question incorrectly and, therefore, think and write faster and are completely at ease when reciting a lesson. Lysenkova has replaced the traditional axiom, "Learn and remember", with "Look and understand".

This is only the first part of Lysenkova's teaching method.

Let us return to the lesson to understand the second part. The teacher says: "Ira Petrakova will lead the class. Please follow Ira."

Ira's desk is to the left of me. The little girl begins to write in her notebook, reciting words as she writes them and underlining the letters which are difficult to remember.

This is how a pupil leads the class and encourages the others to work along with him, and it is the second part of Lysenkova's teaching method. She calls it a running commentary by the pupil, not by the teacher. The child gives the signal to the rest of the class to write or count along with him. The children follow Ira's commentary and know that one of them will soon take her place.

The pupils listen attentively and try not to become distracted, otherwise they will not be able to follow the lesson. They are used to working together and feel confident and content. When the teacher asks a question, all the children raise their hands and are willing to reply. No one gets poor marks. The pupils, who are two months ahead of the curriculum, are assigned a minimum of homework. This is not only a talented teacher's professional victory, it is a moral one as well.

I. Zverev, Full Member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences:

"I don't think that this method could work without the teacher taking special care to teach each child what is required, encourage him, make learning a pleasure and instill in him a desire to study. Sofya Lysenkova's method is certainly an advanced one. It should be thoroughly analysed and adopted."

R. Talyanskaya, a primary school teacher from Lvov:

"Lysenkova has hundreds of followers, people who differ in character and degree of talent. I shall also give her method a try."

After school was out, the two of us stayed on in the classroom. "What else, apart from your trips and open classes, have you done to spread your teaching method?" I asked Sofya Lysenkova.

"I wrote a book entitled *When Studying Is a Joy*. Pedagogika Publishers recently published 50,000 copies. I would like to present it to you. If you have small children, it will come in handy."

"Is the book intended for primary school teachers only?"

"No. I hope it will also be of interest to secondary school teachers who wish to improve their methods. I also believe that my experience will be of use in introducing the new school curricula."

Sheryl Allen Craig, a lawyer from the USA who visited the Soviet Union, said that the Soviet educational system impressed him greatly, especially the fact that the pupils - children of workers and intellectuals, boys and girls - all studied according to a single curriculum.

"What do the parents of your pupils do for a living?" I asked Lysenkova.

“This is a working-class district. There are a number of plants in the vicinity. Many of my pupils’ parents are fitters and turners. Some are bookkeepers, technicians and engineers. They are of many different nationalities.

“Do you have any children?”

“I have a daughter named Ludmila, who is a chemist.”

“What is your motto?”

“I shall first tell you how I came to adopt it. I failed the first time I took the entrance exams for a pedagogical institute. But that did not discourage me. In time I became a teacher. So my motto is: ‘A happy person is one who works in the profession of his choice’.”

When Parents Are Away at Work

After my talk with Sofya Lysenkova, I went out to the school yard. Children in the 7 to 9 year-old age group were playing in the shade. I recognised three girls from Lysenkova’s class: Anya Abramova, Katya Shustikova and Ira Kruglova. “We’re in the extended-day group,” they told me. And Ira added, “My mother works at the plant. She’ll come for me around six, when her shift ends.”

Extended-day schools and groups first appeared in the Soviet Union over 25 years ago. They were first set up to look after children while their parents were at work. However, in time the system became more complex and took on the role of helping parents to bring up their children. Today 11.3 million schoolchildren attend these schools and groups; by 1985 from 13.5 to 14 million, i.e., one-third of the country’s schoolchildren will be cared for after school.

Parents pay only the cost of meals. Low-income families pay even less or nothing at all.

If at least 80 per cent of the pupils attend extended-day groups in a given school, these groups are set up in every class. If less than 80 per cent attend, a group is made up of children from several classes. As a rule, half the children in these groups are primary-school pupils.

A child who attends an extended-day group is shielded from the influence of the street and cared for while his parents are at work. The children's activities are carefully planned so that they are never bored.

A special schedule worked out on the basis of recommendations provided by the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences is followed here. In fact, several such schedules were suggested by the researchers. They differ from one another in some ways, but the basic points are the same: after lessons the children change into play clothes, have lunch (the smaller children take a nap), go outdoors to play and afterwards prepare their homework. Later they play indoors and attend hobby and sports groups.

The USSR Ministry of Education has ordered the extended-day schools and groups to include a compulsory gym hour in their schedules. A school doctor supervises the groups.

Writers, composers, artists and students of different institutes come to schools to speak or to perform for the children.

I interviewed Valentina Tsukanova, the principal of Secondary School No. 587.

"How many children attend the extended-day groups in your school?"

"One hundred. This includes first- to eighth-grade children."

“How much does a school lunch cost?”

“Only 27 kopecks. Half of the children eat lunch free of charge, and 26 pay only 18 kopecks.”

“How will the children be entertained this week, for instance?”

“Today is Monday, the day on which the children go to the neighbourhood cinema, the Borodino. On Tuesdays there are music, drawing and hobby groups. Wednesdays are devoted to sports. The children play volleyball, handball and badminton outdoors, if the weather is good, or in the gym. In the summer the boys play soccer on the school’s playing grounds.”

“What about Thursdays?”

“On Thursdays the pupils rehearse for a talent show and take part in recitation competitions. On Fridays they tidy up around the school, water the plants, dust, sweep the school yard.”

20 Million Young Pioneers

A third-grader is old enough to comprehend many things like: “Who am I? What will I become? Whom can I look up to? How can I help my family and country?”

The day comes when a child of 9 or 10 decides to join the Young Pioneer Organisation, an organisation *of* children, not *for* children. The independent nature of the All-Union Lenin Young Pioneer Organisation is one of its most important features.

Members are accepted on an individual basis. The children meet and decide whether a given pupil merits being accepted or not. The future Young Pioneers take an oath in which they promise their comrades that they will be good students, honest,

hard-working, considerate of others, will participate in the affairs of their country and be friends with children of other lands.

Each child remembers the day he was accepted into the Young Pioneer Organisation all his life—from the generation that was born on the eve of the Revolution to the young parents of today—the solemn line-up, the white shirts and blouses, the red silk Young Pioneer ties and the stirring sounds of the silver bugles.

It is impossible to imagine a child growing up in the Soviet Union today who does not wear a red tie. There are twenty million Young Pioneers in the USSR.

There was a time when they were numbered in the dozens. Over 60 years ago, in February 1922, the first children's communist groups were formed in Moscow. May 19, 1922, is the founding date of the Young Pioneer Organisation. As Lenin said, organising children is the best way to bring up young Communards. The Young Communist League has always sponsored and guided the work of the Young Pioneer Organisation, encouraging in the children a love for their socialist Motherland, fidelity to the Leninist cause and the Communist Party.

The Young Pioneer Organisation works in direct contact with the people and Soviet society. Though the Young Pioneers solve many problems through play, as is only natural for their age group, they try to carry out all their tasks responsibly and efficiently.

We find the following data in the press:

In a campaign called "Operation Grain", five million Young Pioneers in the rural areas of the country gathered thousands of tons of grain that would have otherwise gone to waste. Rural children

help the adults care for domestic animals, raise rabbits and are members of the Blue and Green Patrol (founded to help preserve young fish and to plant new forests). The pupils of school in Mekvena, Georgia, revived the ancient Makha and Zanduri varieties of wheat as their gift to the tillers of the Republic.

Young Pioneers collected a million tons of waste paper, and enough scrap iron to smelt new metal for the trains, bridges and tunnels of the Baikal-Amur Railroad, the country's largest construction project. In the last five-year period, Young Pioneers gathered 150,000 tons of medicinal herbs and wild fruit.

Five million Young Pioneers now sponsor war veterans, veterans of labour, kindergartens and children's homes. For example, the Young Pioneers of Secondary School No. 5 (Moscow) canvassed all the houses in the vicinity of the school to find out which of the tenants needed help. The children go shopping for elderly people who live alone and get their medicine if they are ill. The Young Pioneers make toys and souvenirs for parties in the kindergartens they sponsor. They keep the garden in which the young children play clean, paint fences, and help care for the grounds. Young Pioneers also conduct a continuous campaign called "Good Books for Children's Homes".

The Young Pioneer Organisation is an important educational institution which allows the children to participate in public activities, helps to bring out their finest qualities and encourages them to take an active stand in life. V. Blazhukov, a school principal in the Ukraine, sees an important moral significance in instilling in the children a sense of responsibility, understanding of practical values and a need for independence. Foreign visitors often

ask what the Soviet Union does to make the Young Pioneers' lives interesting, to help develop their talents and abilities.

I will reply in brief, citing statistical data. There are over 99,000 children's extra-curricular establishments in the country. Of these, 4,844 are palaces or houses of Young Pioneers and schoolchildren, 1,353 are young technicians' stations, and 863 are young nature lovers' stations. There are 7,691 music, art and choreographic schools, 6,473 sports schools, and 47 children's railroads. The children are taught by experienced teachers and specialists in many fields.

In the city of Omsk, deep in Siberia, one is impressed by the modern glass and concrete building of the Palace of Young Pioneers. The halls inside are faced with marble and mosaics. When the children come here, they are caught up in an atmosphere of beauty, space and joy. Over 4,000 children are members of its 300 hobby groups. There is a band, a film-making studio, an astronomy group with its own planetarium, a swimming pool and coaches to teach the children.

During summer vacation nearly 14 million children, i. e., every third schoolchild in the USSR, goes to a Young Pioneer camp (either free of charge or at a small percentage of the actual cost). What is life like in a Young Pioneer camp? There are those who claim that it is not beneficial for children to spend their summer vacations in a Young Pioneer camp.

Nine-year-old Marina Senina disagrees: "I never thought it would be so much fun. Everything in summer camp was wonderful: the political song festival, and our drama group. I was the Good Fairy in *Cinderella*. But I liked our walks in the woods best of all. Our leader taught us to listen to

the voices of the birds. I never knew there were so many birds in our woods: jays, finches and wag-tails. And they all talk in different voices. I was in the woods many times before this summer, but it was never as much fun."

This is what Doctor Benjamin Spock said of his visit to Artek: "I'm happy in Artek, where children from all over our planet have gathered. It's wonderful when the boys and girls from 103 countries live together by the warm blue sea, play and dance together, and together express their solidarity in the struggle for peace and friendship..."

"I would like to bring to Artek the 32 million American children so that they would become convinced, would believe how easily people of different nations can find a common language, so that they would know the truth about your peace-loving country and see it the way it really is..."

Twenty-eight Young Pioneer newspapers and 47 magazines are published especially for children. *Pionerskaya Pravda* has a circulation of 8.5 million in the Soviet Union. These publications are printed in Russian and in the languages of the other peoples of the USSR. Additionally, over 60 publishing houses print books for children. Every third book published in the country is a children's book, and all of them aim to instill in the child goodness, kindness and knowledge.

Thus, allegations that the socialist educational system is monotonous and boring are entirely unfounded.

In speaking about the upbringing of Soviet children, one must note that they grow up to be true internationalists. The Young Pioneer Organisation has a long record of internationalist activities dating back to 1924, when the first group in Moscow began collecting money for striking workers in the

Ruhr, Dresden and Hamburg. Pioneers of the 80s are carrying on this fine internationalist tradition.

There are nearly 800 international friendship clubs in Moscow. The Charter of the Yuri Gagarin International Friendship Club (the Moscow City Palace of Pioneers and Schoolchildren on Lenin Hills) begins as follows: "To respond actively to crucial international events; to respond to the atrocities of fascists and racists, and to seek ways and means of rendering aid to the fighting nations and to the children of other countries."

The members of this club correspond with children from other countries, receiving close to 30,000 letters annually from pen pals in the FRG, Great Britain, France, Italy, Cuba and the USA. Members of international friendship clubs throughout the USSR learn foreign languages, study the history and culture of other lands, are well informed about current events in the democratic and children's movements, take part in peace rallies and regularly contribute the money earned by collecting scrap metal, waste paper and medicinal herbs to the Soviet Peace Fund. The latter is the theme of our next story.

◆ The myth about the Soviet military threat, invented by the imperialist propaganda machine, is the greatest lie of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it affects the minds of the children of the world. The editors of *Pionerskaya Pravda*, the Young Pioneer newspaper, received a letter from England which reads, in part: "Dear Communists, my name is Gaby and I am seven-and-a-half. I heard that people in Russia are going to drop a bomb on us in 1981. I'll be 10 by then, but I'll still be too young to die..."¹

Below is a letter written by a group of Soviet children and published in the same newspaper some time before Gaby's. It is addressed to the children of other countries:

"Many children in capitalist countries do not know the truth about us... Communism is not a scare word. Communism means building cities and factories, and making life beautiful and just... The Soviet Union is a country of people who are working, not preparing for war... Our Constitution forbids war propaganda. Nobody scares us talking about nuclear bombs and nobody teaches us to hate other countries. We are taught friendship. We are taught to be concerned about our Motherland and peace."²

¹ *Pionerskaya Pravda*, April 7, 1978, No. 28.

² *Pionerskaya Pravda*, March 10, 1978, No. 20.

Gaby will soon be grown-up and has no need to fear the Soviet Union. My country and my people are still striving for peace as determinedly as before.

I would like to mention but a few of the 80 million people who contributed to the Soviet Peace Fund.

In the autumn of 1941, 44-year-old Sergei Ivanov of Moscow, a barber, enlisted in the Moscow Volunteer Home Guard Infantry Regiment. Ivanov was a man with a truly civilian job, but he took up arms to protect his family and his socialist Motherland from the Nazis.

Sergei Ivanov sacrificed his life for his country. His widow donated the family's precious heirloom to the Peace Fund. Here is the story of Natalya Ivanova:

"I have been waiting for my husband to return from the war for forty years. My child died, and I was left all alone. That's when I decided I must do something useful. So I donated our wedding rings, my gold jewellery and my husband's gold cigarette case to the Soviet Peace Fund. Everyone must do their bit for peace no matter what their age, even pensioners like myself, and I am 84."

I spoke to this frail old woman in her home. I saw her trembling lips and felt her pain at the memory of her husband. But her suffering is alleviated somewhat by knowing that she, like many others, is doing what she can to promote peace. Natalya Ivanova was awarded a special badge of honour by the Soviet Peace Fund "For Active Participation in the Peace Movement."

Secondary School No. 61, Moscow, has also been awarded the same badge. Its pupils have done the most among all the schoolchildren of Moscow to promote friendship among peoples.

In the past fifteen years every pupil of this school has taken part in the peace drive. They do wood-work, make toys, knit and sew, collect waste paper and scrap metal and put on shows. The money they earn is donated to the Soviet Peace Fund, and these donations have been increasing from year to year. The latest contribution was 647 rubles.

During break I spoke to Rita Shaposhnikova, a six-grader and a member of the school's international friendship club:

"When I was in the 1st grade, I made two stuffed toys, a kitten and a dog, and I embroidered hand-kerchiefs. This year I collected 24 kilos of waste paper. We should help children in other countries where there's war, hunger and diseases. That's why our school sent medicine and food to the children of Vietnam. We're proud of our work. Everyone tries to do his best. This year our class donated 27 rubles to the Peace Fund. I know it's not very much, but, after all, the ocean is made up of drops of water."

During my visit to the offices of the Soviet Peace Fund, I was shown a telegram received from the children of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. It read:

"We have transferred 134 rubles to the Soviet Peace Fund. Please open a permanent account for the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Palace of Young Pioneers."

Then I read some of the notations on the money order receipts: "40 rubles from the Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya Young Pioneer Organisation of Ust-Vaenga Settlement for the children of Nicaragua, Vietnam, Chile and Kampuchea."

"We earned 60 rubles clearing the streets after a heavy snowfall. We want to help the children of other countries," wrote the senior classes' pupils of Secondary School No. 91, Perm Region.

“We were paid 5 rubles for collecting medicinal herbs and are sending them to the Peace Fund. The Yuri Gagarin Young Pioneer Organisation of Secondary School No. 3, Ingel Station.”

Angelina Stepanova, People’s Artist of the USSR, Hero of Socialist Labour and Chairman of the Moscow Committee for Aid to the Soviet Peace Fund, told me: “Both adults and children help the international peace movement, not just with words but deeds. It is especially notable that all generations in all the republics of our multinational country are participating in this effort. People respond immediately to international events. The pain of other peoples is their pain.”

The Soviet Peace Fund was founded at the initiative of the Soviet people in 1961. The Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Women’s Committee and the Veterans’ Committee were among the founders of this public organisation. Anatoly Karpov, thrice world chess champion, is Chairman of the Board of the Soviet Peace Fund. The number of Soviet people and organisations participating in the Soviet Peace Fund continues to grow. In recent years, contributions from foreign and Soviet citizens in dollars, pounds, marks, liras and yen have also increased. These contributions are sent to the Fund’s accounts at banks for foreign trade.

The Peace Fund gives financial aid to organisations, movements and peoples fighting for peace, national independence and freedom, and contributes to programmes aimed at developing friendship and co-operation among peoples, banning all types of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction and achieving complete and universal disarmament.

Special help is provided to children who are the victims of the atrocities of fascist regimes, military

conflicts and natural calamities, and to the children of political prisoners. The fund grants scholarships to students from the developing countries studying in the Soviet Union and makes it possible for children whose parents are fighting for the freedom of their countries to receive treatment at Soviet sanatoriums and to spend their summers at Soviet Young Pioneer camps.

During the Vietnam war several Soviet ships carrying blankets, medicine, tractors and mobile electric power stations were sent to Vietnam. The Fund provided assistance to the People's Republic of Kampuchea three times, sending clothing, shoes, rice and sugar. Considerable assistance was rendered to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and to the people of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar, the victims of a hurricane and flood. Children were always the first to receive aid.

The main idea behind the Soviet Peace Programme for the 1980s is: "There can be nothing more important than peace." Tens of millions of people, including the country's young citizens, all members of the Soviet Peace Fund, support this idea. Their deeds are in keeping with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which states that the child shall be given an education which will enable him to develop his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

In the 1920s, when Lenin was asked what the most difficult problem of building a new communist world would be, he replied: educating a new type of individual.

The education of such a person does not necessarily precede the building of a new society, as the socialist Utopians believed. It is a single process. In changing the world after a socialist revolution, the people are simultaneously changed also. The vague beginnings of an ideal personality gradually become a reality. In the struggle to build a new society, the new personality emerges, despite the claims of bourgeois ideologues that it is impossible to change man's possessive and egotistical nature. But this new type of individual has already appeared, a person who acknowledges not only his own ego, but himself as a part of the whole: a patriot, internationalist and all-round developed individual who places a higher value on giving than taking. Such is the concrete achievement of socialism, and this process will continue to be perfected in the future.

A photograph of two-year old Sasha Sikora, a fair-haired boy with clear, alert eyes, was printed in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and then reprinted by many other newspapers throughout the country. Sasha's parents are students, and Sasha will be 20 in the year 2000. "What kind of a world will he face? How should he be brought up?" These words were

printed above the photograph. Below was a small article written by G. Polonsky, a dramatist and USSR State Prize Winner. It read: "The importance of art in bringing up and educating young people is obvious. Its role must grow constantly, supplying the seeds of happiness, play and fantasy, and instilling goodness and compassion in the child. I am concerned with the soul. It must be unique and complex, abhorring brutality and charmed forever by the beauty of good. Will we achieve this goal by the year 2000?"

If I were the editor of that issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I would have placed three pictures – those of a composer, an artist and an actor – beside Sasha's photograph.

I listened to Dmitry Kabalevsky, a world-famous composer and Full Member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences playing his music for children at the Moscow Conservatory.

Afterwards, the children put a red Young Pioneer tie on the tall grey-haired man, as a token of their esteem. The composer has written many books for children and is the host of the TV and radio "Talks About Music" series for children. Kabalevsky left the Conservatory to become a 1st-grade music teacher and has introduced a basically new curriculum for secondary school music classes (from 1st to 7th grades).

Kabalevsky is sometimes jokingly called Don Quixote. He has brought music to children, not as a supplement to life, but as an important part of it. He is now working on the question of "the spiritual culture of young people in our society. It's not a matter of what today's young person chooses to be, but what his outlook, his moral qualities, his attitude towards his work and his fellowmen and to his own place in society will be. Art can and should

play an important role in forming a person's cultural life."

The second picture I would have placed beside Sasha's would have been that of Boris Nemensky, Secretary of the Board of the Artists' Union of the USSR and Deputy Chairman of the Council on Aesthetic Education of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR. Nemensky has followed Kabalevsky's example. He teaches first-graders in a Moscow school and has introduced a new curriculum in art. The course of study he devised has been tested on a wide scale in the 1st to 8th grades in a number of urban and rural schools.

Nemensky says: "It is possible and necessary to put up new storeys in the aesthetic educational building, beginning with the very first grades."

I sat in on one of his classes and watched him work with a group of third-graders, assembling and mounting their works to produce a large, bright mural depicting a Russian winter festival. Nemensky told me he gave the children "not only pencils, paints and clay, but wood, cardboard, linoleum and wire. The children cut, paste, bend, mould and solve problems of space and proportion, learning a great number of skills in the process. The child feels himself to be a creator and expresses his attitude towards the world through his work." There is another point that is equally important: the artist has proposed that this course be taught in all Soviet schools. This means little Sasha will benefit from it as well, for he will enter school in 1986.

My third contemporary whose work is closely connected with child education is Sergei Obraztsov, People's Artist of the USSR, head and Chief Director of Moscow's Central Puppet Theatre, one of the 125 puppet theatres in the Soviet Union. It is very difficult to catch him in Moscow, especially in sum-

mer. Obraztsov and his theatre have already toured 35 countries and 400 cities of the Soviet Union, and continue to tour. "He was in Madrid yesterday, is in London today and will fly to Tokyo or to the Urals tomorrow," I was told. "And then there are rehearsals and conferences with the playwrights and composers. No, it's impossible to pin him down."

With no hope of success, I phoned the Central Puppet Theatre and explained that I just had to see Sergei Obraztsov.

"Come today at noon," I was told.

"Who's speaking, please?" I asked.

"Obraztsov."

On the way to the theatre I recalled what I knew about Obraztsov and puppet theatres in general. Sergei Obraztsov was educated as an artist and has performed as a puppeteer over 50 years. I remembered that in his book, *My Profession*, Obraztsov observed that one may fool around and play with puppets, but never use them to take advantage of children. I also know that many children take their dolls along when they attend a performance at the puppet theatre. When Obraztsov once asked a little girl why she had brought her doll along, the child replied: "So my dolly can look at your dolls."

Sergei Obraztsov met me in his study which was filled with singing canaries. I later learned that all the birds had hatched in the theatre at one time or another. Obraztsov is over 80, but he has a firm step and is in good health. As I interviewed him, I appreciated his unexpected replies to my questions.

"You stage performances for both adults and children. What do you try to teach the children in the audience?"

"I believe that kindness, honesty and courage are the most important qualities to strive for. We want

people to be better, and this means both children and adults. That is what we live and work for."

"What can you say about the specific nature of a puppet theatre?

"A puppet show is the most allegorical of all types of performances. An inanimate object suddenly comes to life. Some think that a puppet theatre is for little children. But it should not be thought of as a pacifier. If it is not art, then no one needs it. If it is art, it must be regarded seriously, as any other art."

"It has been estimated that in the USA, for example, by the time a child is 18, he will have witnessed an average of 18,000 TV killings, and all this takes place during his formative years."

"I always ask whom a play is intended for. Children or adults? If it is for children, then of what age? Little children, or older ones? The difference in ages among children is not at all the same as the difference in ages among adults. Children of 5, 10 and 15 have very little in common and are not at all alike as audiences. Can a five-year-old boy bear to see a wolf gobbling up a grandmother? Why scare little children, even if it is all only make-believe?"

"Do you mean to say that children should never be shown anything frightening?"

"They certainly can be, but you have to know who will be watching the performance. If your audience is 9, 10 or 12 years old, and if they are boys, you can't do without a scary scene. Theirs is a very active age; they yearn for a struggle and victory. This desire of teenagers for a life full of adventures can be put to good or evil purposes."

"What about the comical?"

"As for the comical, one must be as careful here as when dealing with the scary. Not all laughter is

beneficial. I should like to hope that the laughter I hear in the audience during my performances is not at all like the laughter a dirty joke evokes."

Then Sergei Obraztsov said. "I would like you to see three plays for three different age groups. *Thirty-Eight Parrots* is for pre-schoolers. *Pinocchio* is for primary-school children, and *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* is for pre-teens."

I went to see all three performances, each of which was perfectly attuned to a definite age group. I will discuss the latter two.

Pinocchio (retold by Alexei Tolstoy for Russian children) has been performed over 500 times. It was staged by S. Obraztsov and E. May. I watched the first act from the orchestra, dividing my attention between the stage and the audience, I watched the second act from the wings, where I found myself in the wondrous atmosphere of the puppet theatre.

It is a different world entirely. Anatoly Veshchikov, a young actor, stood beside me. As a child, he used to come here to see Obraztsov's performances. When he was 14 he came to the theatre and asked to be taken on as an actor. He waited until he was 17 and graduated from secondary school to get a job here as a stage hand and, later, as a props man. After he graduated from a theatrical school, he was at last hired as an actor. Today Anatoly was making his debut as Pinocchio. The puppet was on his hand.

Vera Zhukova, an actress who has been with the troupe for 37 years, stood beside him. She worked something resembling a green glove. It was the frog puppet. The dolls in this theatre are carried around in the actors' arms like children.

After the play I spoke to the children in the foyer where dolls from 50 countries are on display in large showcases.

Svetlana Kiselyova, a second-grader, said, "I liked the music and the bright colours, and the dolls. You know, a king was watching the play and scolding his actors. They were afraid of him. And then they stopped being afraid. And they began acting for everybody. I wanted to help them before it was too late. When the Fire-Eater was trying to fool Pinocchio to get the golden key I shouted to Pinocchio to warn him. And he didn't give him the key. And then I shouted to the dolls when the Fire-Eater wanted to catch them and put them into a sack. Everybody else shouted, too."

Svetlana's mother, a librarian, said, "All these new impressions! And a child's ticket costs only 40 kopecks."

I spoke to Yura Stakhanov, who is 12, after a performance of *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*. This is what he said:

"I saw a film about Aladdin, but I didn't like it as much as the puppets. Actors play people in the film. Sometimes they don't act very well, and you can see it. But here you see dolls and think they're alive. The actors make the dolls act like that. It's very interesting, and very hard to do. You begin to think about a lot of things. Like how does the actor make the puppet move? But you only think about that later, because you forget about everything else when you're watching the play. It's very colourful, and I liked the characters, most of all Princess Budur. Aladdin's brave. He's not afraid of anyone, not the villains or of any kind of danger. I didn't like the villains."

Here was the audience – thoughtful, happy, and sharing the joys and sorrows of the characters of the play. I wondered whether Principle 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which establishes the child's right to entertainment "directed to

the same purposes as education" means this kind of entertainment? Perhaps this is the kind of childhood that the Declaration speaks of.

The answer may be found in something Freda Brown told me in an interview. She said that all ten humane principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child have been most fully realised in the USSR, and that the Soviet people and government, and all the public organisations of the country are true to the cause of children's happiness and peace. The Women's International Democratic Federation further developed this idea: "The life of all children could be happier if all governments and society as a whole showed as much concern for children as socialist countries."

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